

THE
PRACTICAL WORK

Of the late REVEREND
ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF
of Culfargie, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel at Abernethy.

WITH TWO TREATISES:

The first in defence of the
SUPREME DEITY of the SON of GOD;

The second being an enquiry into the
PRINCIPLE and END of MORAL ACTION

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME FIRST.

—*He being dead, yet speaketh*, Heb. xi. 4.



To which are subjoined

TWO SERMONS:

BY

WILLIAM MONCRIEFF,

Minister of the Gospel at ALLOA.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by GAVIN ALSTON,

Sold by the Booksellers in Town and Country

MDCCLXXIX.

FRANCIS & TAYLOR



P R E F A C E.

MR ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF, the Author of these *Practical Works*, was the son of Mr MATTHEW MONCRIEFF of Culfargie; and grandson of the famous Mr ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF, minister at Scoonie, in Fife, who had his share in the sufferings which took place during the persecution, before the ever-memorable revolution in 1688. After prosecuting his studies in Scotland, and for some time at Leyden in Holland, he was licensed to preach the gospel by the presbytery of Perth; and was ordained minister at Abernethy, in September 1720. He was a zealous defender of the truth, in opposition to the errors vented by Professors Simpson and Campbell. This appeared, not only from his contendings in the judicatories; but from his laying himself out in his sermons, to establish the precious truths denied, and to warn against the dangerous errors vented; as may be seen by the reader in these volumes. He likewise professedly wrote against the *Arian blasphemy*, taught by *Professor Simpson*; proving, from scripture, the *true, proper, and supreme DEITY* of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ: and against the Antiscriptural scheme of self-love, vented by *Professor Campbell*; in his enquiry into the *principle, rule, and end* of MORAL ACTIONS. His ESSAYS on these subjects are reckoned well worth the preserving and handing down to posterity: and as the errors, confuted in them, do still sadly prevail in many places; the republishing of them is peculiarly seasonable at this time. They are accordingly added to his Practical Works, in the second volume.

He was one of the four who protested against the act of assembly 1733, which restrained ministerial freedom; and who, upon being cast out of the established church for their faithfulness, did state a secession from her; constituting themselves into a presbytery, for bearing testimony to a covenanted-work of reformation, and against defections from the same; and, for the relief of the Lord's heritage, oppressed and scattered by violent Antichristian intrusions, made upon them by the judicatories of the established church: and who accordingly emitted a judicial act and testimony to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and govern-

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ment of the church of Scotland; and laid themselves out to relieve the oppressed heritage of God, by dispensing gospel-ordinances unto them.

At the breach of the Associate Synod in 1747, he was the only one of the surviving three of the first four seceding ministers (Mr Wilson at Perth having, long before this, been called home by his LORD and MASTER) who held fast their original testimony; to the maintaining of which, the members of the Associate Presbytery had engaged, by solemn oath, in the renovation of our covenants in 1743: when it was attacked, and materially given up with, by the prevailing party in the Associate Synod, who are now known by the name of *Burghers*:--whose distinguishing characters are, An attachment to the religious clause of some burghs-oaths; the defence of which is the very ground upon which they stand: A violent opposition to the testimony which, by the oath God, they had engaged to maintain; while, after all the noise they have made about a new testimony, another has not yet been substituted in its room: A laying aside the practice, if not managing a real

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opposition to covenanting-work: with much of that Latitudinarian laxness, as to admission to their communion, which is more openly avowed by those of the Relief-scheme.

THE hand the Author had in public matters, both at the secession from the established church, and at the breach in the Associate Synod,---was, in consequence of light from the Lord, vouchsafed to him, in answer to his prayers. It appears, from what he has left behind him in writ, relating to his exercise through a good part of his life; that, on these occasions, he was much exercised in wrestling with God. The Publisher would reckon it imprudent in him, to launch forth in the praises of one with whom he was so nearly related. Yet there were, besides others, two great lines in his character, so obvious to those that knew him, that he cannot forbear to mention them. The one is, his having been, in a very remarkable manner, *A man of prayer*. Much of his time was spent in this exercise in secret. Every thing was, with him, an errand to the throne of grace. He, somewhere, in his diary, says, That he blesses the

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Lord that he durst not venture on any thing, without seeking his direction. The other was, *A distinguished concern for the souls of the young and rising generation.* This appeared much in his ministrations among his people ; and will appear to the reader, from his sermons to the rising generation, now republished. He was chosen to succeed Mr Wilson, in taking the charge of the students of divinity belonging to the Associate Presbytery, afterwards the Associate Synod ; and continued to have the inspection of them, as their teacher, till his death. He, after long tenderness, which he endured with Christian patience and resignation, was called off by his LORD and MASTER, upon the 7th of October 1761 ; being about 66 years of age.

HIS Practical Works were originally printed, from time to time, in small pamphlets ; which, from the nature of such publications, are ready soon to be buried in oblivion. The Publisher not only reckons it due to the memory of the Author, that they should be preserved ; but considering the great importance of

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the subjects, with the plain and edifying manner in which they are handled, he has ground to think, that (through the divine blessing) they may be of use to the present and rising generations, and also to posterity. That this may be the case, is, and shall be, through grace, the prayer of

Allos, March 22. }
1779.

WILL. MONCRIEFF.

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The Duty of contending for the Faith *.

A

SERMON preached before the Provincial Synod of Perth and Stirling, at their meeting at Stirling, April 1732.

J U D E Ver. 3.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

THE apostle Jude having inscribed his epistle, he proceeds, in our text, to exhort the saints, and the church of Christ, to defend and maintain the purity of the Christian doctrine, against the errors and heresies, by which the Ebionites, Nicolaitans, and Gnostics, the false teachers of these times, attempted to overthrow and subvert it.

* To this discourse, when first published, was prefixed the following address: "Some of my reverend brethren, who heard this discourse delivered, were pleased to signify their approbation of it; and understanding that some general heads, which were only hinted at in public, were farther enlarged and extended in my notes, and having given it as their opinion, that the publishing of it might be seasonable, I was prevailed upon to comply with their desire.

"I have added only a few sentences in some places, and inserted some citations in the margin, (these references are now taken into the sermon), which I thought necessary to illustrate the subject; and humbly submit the whole to the judgment and candour of my reader, who, I hope, will construct fa-

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IN the beginning of this verse, he accounts for the reasons which moved him to write them in this manner; namely, his love to them, his pastoral care over them, and the danger they were in of being seduced by these corrupt doctrines.

AND in the latter part of the verse, which is the subject of our ensuing discourse, he lays down the necessary and seasonable exhortation, which he enforces and illustrates in the sequel of this epistle.

THAT which our apostle calls upon all Christians, in their respective characters, to maintain and defend, is, "the faith once delivered to the saints;" that is, the doctrine of the faith in Christ, fully and unalterably, delivered to the church in the holy scriptures.

AND the duty exhorted to is, "earnestly to contend for the faith." The compound word *επαγωνισμα* is exceeding strong, and signifies, to contend for the faith in the most vigorous, resolute, and unwearied manner.

THE words thus briefly explained, and laid open in their plain and obvious meaning, lay before us the following doctrinal proposition, namely, "That it is the duty of all those who profess the name of Christ, in their respective stations and characters, to maintain and defend the purity of the Christian doctrine, and more

vourably of my small performance; which is not intended to reflect upon any person, but to vindicate some valuable truths; which, in my opinion, have been attacked and subverted by some within this church. And this I have attempted, in the first six particulars of the first general head. And if I shall be convinced of any mistake I have fallen into, I shall most frankly acknowledge it, and thank any that shall set me right."

especially these truths of God which are attacked and subverted in their own times."

IN discoursing this subject, I shall endeavour, by divine assistance, I. To speak of some articles of the Christian faith, which we, in this church are, in an especial manner, called upon to contend for at this day. II. To shew what is imported in this duty of contending earnestly for the faith. III. To discourse briefly of the means, in the use of which, all serious Christians are obliged, in their different characters, to contend for the faith of the gospel. And conclude, by proposing and enforcing the exhortation in the text, by a few motives or arguments.

I. WE proceed, in the first place, to speak of some articles of the Christian faith, which have been attacked and subverted by some within this church; and which therefore we are called upon, in an especial manner, to maintain and defend. And,

I. The doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, his proper, true, and supreme Deity, his independent being, necessary existence and generation, and his being of one and the same substance, in number, with the Father and Holy Spirit, is an important and fundamental article of the Christian faith; which we are called upon, in the most zealous manner, to assert and defend against all the bold and pernicious attempts that have been made to overthrow and subvert it. This doctrine is displayed, with the most convincing evidence, through the whole of divine revelation. But having, upon some other occasion, endeavoured to establish and defend it *, I shall not enlarge further upon it at present.

* The proper, true, and supreme Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, proved and asserted from the holy scriptures.

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2. WE are likewise taught, in the holy scripture, that God made a covenant with mankind in Adam, and that Adam was a federal head to his posterity.

It is very manifest, that God, in justice and equity, could have constituted Adam such a federal head : for it was arbitrary, in a sovereign God, to give man a being, and to preserve him in that being, or not, as seemed best in his sight ; and man, as a dependent creature, was obliged to obey his Creator, although he had been encouraged to it by no promise of future and lasting felicity. The promise of eternal life, was therefore voluntary and free, and what man could not claim, by virtue of his own obedience and conformity to the law *. And it must be acknowledged, that the Author of our being might convey these undeserved blessings in what manner he pleased ; that is, either upon our own personal good behaviour, as he did with the angels, or upon the obedience and perseverance of the common parent of mankind.

THE scripture is plain, that God transacted with mankind, and not merely with the first two individuals of the kind. For the grant of dominion over the inferior creatures, was made to the human race, and mankind received the first benediction, Gen. i. 28. and were entitled to all the promised blessings, upon performing the condition required in that transaction. And the sanction of the covenant of works reached all mankind ; for it is declared, by the apostle Paul, that “ all died in Adam,” 1 Cor. xv. 22. And from this it follows, that all mankind were under the preceptive

* See Bishop Bull's State of man before the fall, and Westminster Confession, chap. vii. §. 1.

part of that covenant ; because, to suppose reasonable creatures liable to suffer for the breach of a law, which, neither in their own persons, nor in their representative, they were obliged to fulfil, is to introduce a wild opinion, which is neither supported by reason nor revelation, but is contradictory to both, Rom. viii. 2. And it is likewise plainly asserted in the holy scriptures, that the law, or covenant of works, is become “ weak through the flesh,” as to every man ; which supposeth, that, before sin entered, it was every way sufficient to entail life and immortality on mankind, which it could do no otherwise, but by Adam’s obedience as a public person. But not to digress from our present purpose, by entering upon this argument, I shall only further observe, that this doctrine is confirmed and illustrated by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans v. 12. *. Where he expressly affirms, “ that all mankind sinned “ in Adam,” and that thereby they became justly liable to death, the proper punishment of sin †. And it is plain, that mankind could not otherwise sin in Adam, but as he was the federal head of his posterity. It is all one to the point in hand, whether the words

* Εφ’ ὃ πάντες ἥμαρτον, *In quo omnes peccaverunt*; *ἔτι* being put for *et*, which is not unusual in Scripture, and is often so used by the best writers in the Greek tongue. *Vid. Budai commenting. Græcæ*, p. 506. This reading was contended for by Austin, against the Pelagians, rejecting their *eo quod*. Mr Chubb, in his pretended metonymy, in this place, renders the apostle’s reasoning absurd, and introduces a mere tautology into the text.

† *Prosper contra Colutorem*, cap. 20. *Nisi forte dicatur in Adami posteros pœnam transisse, non culpam quod omnino falso dicitur, — nimis enim impium est hoc de Dei sentire justitiâ, quod a prevaricatione liberos cum reis v. luerit esse damnatos. Putet ergo culpa, ubi non latet pœna, et societas peccati convivatur de communione supplicii : ut quod est humana miseria non de institutione Creatoris, sed de retributione sit judicis.*

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29. *as* be rendered *for that, or in whom.* For, though the latter words seem to deliver this doctrine more precisely, yet it being affirmed, according to the other rendering, that all who die have sinned, and it being certain that many die, who have not sinned in their own persons, these must have sinned in Adam; they could sin no other way. And this interpretation is supported by the context; in which the apostle affirms, “that by the offence of one many were dead;” “That the judgment was by one to condemnation;” “that by the offence of one judgment came upon all” “men to condemnation:” and from the scope and design of the apostle, which is to instruct us, that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to his people, for justification, in like manner * as Adam’s sin is imputed to all his posterity for condemnation; and that the imputation of both is founded upon the public representation of those two distinct persons, the first and second Adam, each of them the federal heads of two distinct families..

AND seeing all mankind sinned in Adam, and by his disobedience were made sinners, that is, upon his fall, his sin was legally imputed to and charged upon them, there is no ground to imagine, that the souls of infants, since the fall, are created as pure and holy as Adam’s was created. Neither has that other opinion, of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, any better foundation. For we are assured, from the sacred records, that they are all born in sin, that, by

* Theodoret. *dial. 3. Vide quomodo quæ Christi sunt, cum iis, quæ sunt Adami conferantur.* — *Cum peccato justitia, cum execratione benedictio.* Chrysost. *Quam dixerit tibi Judæus, quomodo unus Christus virtute, mundus salvatus est? Potes et dicere, quomodo et uno inobediente Adam mundus damnatus est?*

nature, they are children of wrath, and that they need the spirit of God to regenerate and cleanse them, and the blood of Christ to justify them, which are exhibited in the sacrament of baptism, by divine warrant dispensed unto them. And considering that original sin is the root and fountain of all that wickedness and impiety, which at any time has been found among men, we shall look upon it as a groundless opinion, that all infants, even of Christian, and far more of infidel parents, are saved, until it be made probable from the holy scriptures, that they are all elected *, and before death regenerated. And this, we suppose, n thinking man will undertake.

3. We are likewise taught, in the sacred writings, that carnal reason is utterly unfit to determine in the mysteries of revealed religion; and that the faith of men to a divine revelation, cannot be ultimately resolved into moral arguments, founded upon propositions naturally revealed.

THE apostle Paul tells us, that men, in a natural state, are dead in sins, vassals to their lusts, and slaves to Satan, Eph. ii. 1. 2.; that the things of the Spirit of God, namely, Christ crucified, and the benefits of his death, for the salvation of sinners, are spiritually discerned; and that therefore the natural man, by his carnal reason, neither doth nor can understand them, but looketh on them as foolishness, 1 Cor. ii. 14. And further, we are assured from the holy scriptures, "that the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7.; that the imaginations of the heart of the unregenerated man is evil, and only evil continually, Gen. vi. 3.; and that he is alienated from the life of

* Westminster Confess. ch. x. § 3.

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God, through his ignorance and blindness of mind, Eph. iv. 8. All which say, in the strongest terms, that human reason cannot determine in the mysteries of revealed religion; and that it can have no right to reject such of them, as, it imagines, are not agreeable to its dictates and corrupt principles. Human reason, having got a bruise in the fall, is weak, even in its own sphere: with how much toil doth it creep from letters to words, and from words to arts and sciences; and when it is there, how little doth it know? Can it explain the nature of attraction, unriddle a load-stone, or draw out an occult quality to open view, and strip the meanest creature of the investing accidents, and look upon the naked essence thereof? And shall such a weakling as this, dunced in every atom within its own sphere, pretend to determine in, or rule over sacred mysteries, which come out of the bosom of God, by divine revelation, to be the eternal wonder of angels and men?

It is owned, that reason, or rational arguments, are of great use for stopping the mouths of gainfayers, and that they are sufficient to beget a moral certainty of the divine original of the scriptures. But divine faith, in the nature of the thing, is an assent, upon the testimony of God himself speaking in his word, which layeth a foundation for the most certain knowledge, and highest evidence of the truth of what is thus revealed. For it is as evident and certain, that what God saith is true, as that the whole is greater than its part. And the scriptures sufficiently shew themselves to be the word of God, by their own innate evidence, and the illumination of the same Holy Spirit who indited them *. The genius of a cele-

* *Vid. Harm. Confess. p. 10. 12. 13. Confess. chap. 1. par. 5. Calvin. Instit. lib. 1. cap. 7. § 4. 5. Whittaker contrav. de Script. quest. 3. cap. i. pag. 286.*

brated author appears evident to the judicious, in his stile and manner of writing. The skill of an ingenious architect, or an accomplished limner, distinguish their performances from all others of the kind. And every man, upon all occasions, satisfies his neighbour, without any chain of moral arguments, that it is he himself that converseth with him, and not another man. And shall we imagine, that the great God has not engraven such signatures of his authority, wisdom, holiness, mercy, and faithfulness, upon his own word, as do sufficiently distinguish it from all other writings whatsoever, and clearly evidence to all, who are not under the power of their natural blindness and unbelief, that it is the word of God, and not of man? And if infidels and unbelievers are sensible of no such evidence, doth it any more disprove what is advanced, than blind men, their not seeing the light, will prove, that there is neither light nor sight among men?

THE apostles of Christ, who were employed to convert the world, made no use of these moral arguments, which some, at this day, would ultimately resolve our faith into. For we are assured by the apostle Paul, that their speech, and their preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and that on purpose, that the faith of their hearers should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. ii. 4. 5. And many illiterate persons, have, in all ages, believed the scriptures, to the saving of their souls, who were never able to understand the force of these arguments. The prophets, of old, delivered their message to the people of God, giving no other reason for it, but "Thus saith the Lord;" and God himself did remit his ancient people, to the evidence his word did give, by its own light and power.

as sufficient to distinguish it from all impostures, Jer. xxiii. 28. 29. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" In like manner, our Lord Jesus hath taught us clearly, in the parable of the rich man, that if men are not affected by the evidence of the word itself, they would give no credit to a messenger from the dead, nor be convinced by the most evident miracles, or astonishing prodigies; Luke xvi. 27. 31.

4. WE are also taught, in the holy scriptures, that the gospel alone is the word of reconciliation; and that human reason cannot learn, from the works of creation and providence, that God is reconcileable to sinners, and that there is a remedy provided for sin.

It is not pretended, that they could have revealed this to man in his primitive state, and how can they do it now, seeing they are still the same in themselves? We are sure, that they revealed no such thing to Adam after the fall; for he fled from the presence of God, to hide himself in the thickets of paradise. They manifest the power of the Creator, and the wisdom of the Governor of the universe, "his eternal power and Godhead," as the apostle expresses it. But they cannot reveal the purposes of his grace, and the free acts of his will; and of this kind is his reconcileableness to sinners. Natural conscience, and the law, with the inbred notions in the mind of man, about God's holiness and vindictive justice*, do all pronounce

* See Dr Owen on Psal. cxxx. 4.

wrath against the sinner, Rom. ii. 14. 15. Gal. iii. 10. ; but know nothing of pardon and reconciliation, which is revealed only by the gospel, by which alone men are called to repentance, Rom. i. 32. Acts xvii. 30.

NEITHER did tradition, together with the works of nature, reveal God's reconcileableness to the Heathen, and that a remedy was provided. For we are assured, that the world, by all the advantages they enjoyed that way, knew not God ; and that therefore it was necessary to publish the gospel unto them, as the only means of their salvation, 1 Cor. i. 18. 25. And that, when it was revealed, they were so far from understanding its spiritual mysteries, by their natural powers and abilities, that they rejected it as foolishness, and not agreeable to their carnal reasonings, 1 Cor. xi. 14. Was it possible, that, by their natural abilities, in the use of the means that they had, they could know that a remedy was provided for sin, and yet reproach it with folly, when it was clearly revealed to them by the gospel? And could they have any true knowledge of the inexorable justice and infinite holiness of God, and yet despise the only way of reconciling their different interests in the cross of Christ? And if they only imagined, that God passed as lightly over their sins, as they did themselves, and that he might be appeased by their victims and sacrifices, this would not say, that they knew God was reconcileable to sinners, but that they were grossly ignorant both of God and of themselves. Paul tells, that the Athenians, notwithstanding all their study of nature, and knowledge in tradition, were ignorant worshippers of the unknown God, Acts xvii. 23. And our Saviour assures us, that the Samaritans, who lived in the neighbourhood of Judea, and might therefore have known as much by tradition as any other people,

that yet "they worshipped they knew not what," John iv. 22.; and shall we believe, that such as remained grossly ignorant of the nature of God, were able to know his reconcileableness to sinners?

LET any sober man but consider the extravagant fancies of Thales and Democritus, as to the origin of all things; and of Aristotle about the eternity of the world; of Epicurus, and the Stoicks, about divine providence; and reflect upon the obscenities and inhumanities in the laws of Lycurgus, so much famed among the Lacedemonians; and he cannot but be convinced, that these philosophers were grossly ignorant of the essential perfections of God: and if so, how could they themselves, or the more unthinking part of mankind among them, come to know, from all the means that they had, that God was reconcileable to sinners, and that there was a remedy provided for sin? Let men therefore, as Bernard saith, beware of going about to make Plato and other Pagan philosophers Christians, lest thereby they prove themselves to be Heathens*.

I SHALL only further remark, that divine revelation was necessary to men, in a lapsed state, for other ends than to teach them the extent of the law of nature, and to inform them of the necessary motives of their obedience†. For it has been made evident by the defenders of revealed religion, that besides the necessary motives of obedience, many other things were hid from the most attentive among the Heathen; such as the origin of sin, and of that corruption of nature, which every man cannot but feel in him-

* Bernard. *ep. ff.* 190. *Westm. Confess.* chap. 10. § 4.

† See Mr Campbell's treatise of Enthusiasm.

self, and observe in others, the method of expiating our guilt, and satisfying the justice of God, without which the pardon of sin was not so much as possible; and the means and manner of worshipping God acceptably *. And it is certain, that to find out a way, to exercise mercy upon sinners, without the violation of justice, and to make the pardon of sinners consistent with the holiness of God's nature, the honour of his laws, and his hatred of sin, was the product of the love, mercy, and manifold wisdom of God; and a mystery, which angels look into with wonder and praise. This is what the moral law could never possibly reveal, though it commands us to assent to it, when revealed by the gospel. And the observation of the moral law alone, was not sufficient to entail real and lasting felicity upon man in his primitive estate, without a due regard to the positive law his Creator prescribed to him †.

5. We are likewise taught, in the sacred writings, that

* See Mr Halyburton against Deism, and Dr Clark his discourse of natural and revealed religion.

† See a discourse concerning the prevailing evils of the present times, wherein some solid remarks are made upon Mr C——'s pamphlet. I shall only observe, that there is one principle he takes for granted, and which seems to be the main hinge of his whole reasoning in that performance, viz. that no man can possibly become an enthusiast of a sudden. Now whether enthusiasm be considered as the effect of pure mechanism, or of the influence of a diabolical spirit, I suppose, it may possibly employ all Mr C——'s skill in the animal œconomy, and in the nature and operations of spirits, to prove it, that a man may not become an enthusiast in a few days, as well as in the course of some years. But though the subject he treats can be confirmed from most solid topics, yet, till he make good what is above observed, the argument will not conclude in the manner he has laid it, with that evidence could be wished, in a subject so weighty and important.

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men, in a lapsed state, have lost all ability and power to what is good * ; and that there is no established connection, by divine promise, betwixt the works of the natural man and saving grace.

THE salvation of sinners is accomplished, in a way wherein God alone is honoured, grace exalted, the creature depressed, and all boasting excluded. But men would have whereof to glory, if they had natural powers and abilities to what is spiritually good, and, by their own improvement of them, made themselves to differ from others.

THE apostle Paul assures us, that men in a natural state " are dead in sins," Eph. ii. 1. ; that they are at " enmity with " God," Rom. viii. 7. ; and that they " know not the things " of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14.. " And can it be supposed, that men, dead and impotent in their powers, at enmity with God, the Fountain of grace, in their hearts, and ignorant of their own wants, and of Christ, in whom God's purposes of grace do center and meet, are, notwithstanding, able to seek saving grace with sincerity, and faith of being heard ; and that without hypocrisy, formality, or deceit, in such addresses to God ?

THE same apostle describes the state of men before conversion in the most moving terms, " There is " none righteous, no not one ; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. " There is none that doth good, no not one," Rom. iii. 11. 12. And he tells us, that to be a sinner, and to be without strength or power to do good, go in-

* Westm. Confess. chap. 9. § 3.

separably together, Rom. v. 6. 8. And that we are not sufficient, by our own abilities, so much as to conceive a good thought in our minds, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 Cor. xv. 10. ; and that the people of God owe all the good they do, and their very powers and abilities, to the grace of God, " who worketh in them both to " will and to do of his good pleasure." In like manner, our Lord Jesus hath taught us, " That " without him," or separate from him, " we can do " nothing," John xv. And his followers, upon all occasions, profess their own weakness, and utter insufficiency to every thing spiritually good, and their humble confidence in his promised grace and strength alone, for enabling them to perform every commanded duty. But to desire saving grace with sincerity, and to seek it with faith of being heard, without either formality or deceit, supposeth and implieth some spiritual emotions of soul after God, the Fountain of all grace, and some kind of approbation of the method of grace, and its conveyance through a crucified Christ ; all which are certainly good in themselves, and cannot be exerted, without some supernatural abilities and powers.

I SHALL add further, that it is plain God hath instituted means, and that he ordinarily worketh grace in the heart in the use of them. And this is sufficient to give men a probable ground of hope, that they may be blessed to them, as well as to others ; and to encourage them to attend upon a sovereign God, in the means of his own appointment.

6. WE are taught in the holy scriptures, that all men are bound to make the glory of God their chief end ; though yet they are called, herewith, to pursue happiness in the enjoyment of him.

THE apostle Paul confirms this doctrine from that plain topic, That God is the first cause; and therefore he is the ultimate end of all things, Rom. xi. 36. And he enjoins it as a necessary duty, to direct all our actions to his glory, as our highest end, 1 Cor. x. 31.; which he enforceth from the strongest argument, Christ's dying for his people, that they should live, not to themselves, but to himself and his glory, as their highest end, who died for them, and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 15. It is certain that Adam no sooner received his being, but he was obliged to love and obey his Creator, though no promise of future happiness had been made unto him. And as God made all things for himself, and wisely directs the inferior creatures to answer the end of his glory; so it is the distinguishing character of reasonable creatures, acting as such, of council and design, to promote the same noble end with the Author of their being, and to chuse that which is best in itself, as their highest and ultimate end. And it seems plainly to be the same absurdity, to make a creature itself the end of its actions, as to make its own will the rule of its life.

THE apostle Paul condemns those who did service to them, which by nature are no gods, Gal. iv. 8.; intimating that religious worship is primarily founded upon the infinite excellencies of God, and what he is in himself. And both Moses and the prophets teach us the same thing, Exod. xx. 2. Jer. x. 6: 7. Wherefore a prevailing respect to the glory of God, in celebrating his super-eminent excellencies, is the chief motive of religious worship. And this doth manifestly establish the subject in hand*.

* *Quando objectum religiosi cultus est, non ens sufficientiss.*

GOD has made man capable of enjoying himself, and, at his creation, condescended to encourage his obedience by a promise of happiness, which is renewed through Christ in the gospel-covenant. It is therefore no part of the Christian scheme, that men are to be denied to their own happiness, and willing to forego it. What we learn from the holy scripture, is, that we are to love God in a supreme manner, and that we are to love him chiefly for himself*, and not merely or chiefly for the prospect of our own happiness. And this is the very sum of the moral law itself. The ever-blessed God could love nothing above himself, and his own glory, because there was nothing good or great, and truly lovely, besides himself. It therefore flows, from his own infinite perfection, that he loves himself in a supreme manner; and it is his peculiar glory to do so. Upon the other hand, for a finite creature to be acted by a principle of self-love, that is, to love nothing above itself, and what relates to itself, argues the greatest imperfection, and depravation of nature. For it is to say, that there is nothing greater or better than itself, and what re-

num, pariter ejusdem judicio fundamentum; quod est absoluta sufficientia omnes omnino involvens perfectiones. D'Vries Exercit. rat. p. 107. Praclare ipse Epicurus apud Ciceronem, Tam eximium esse, ait, & præstantem naturam deorum (Dei) ut ea debeat ipsa per se, ad se colendum allicere sapientem.

* We must first conceive the object lovely and excellent in itself, before we can wish it kind and loving to us. Let us consider how much we are in love with Cato, Scipio, &c. upon the bare knowledge of their virtues, although from them we derive no personal advantage. Since there, we pay so much disinterested love to some few faint and unrefined virtues, that never did profit us, how much, on such a score, and at that rate, should we love him, who so possesses all perfection, that each of his perfections is infinite? *Mr. Boyle, in his discourse of seraphic love.*

lates to itself ; than which nothing can be more blasphemous : or that a rational creature, acting as such, may prefer a lesser good to a greater ; than which nothing can be more absurd. And so true is it, that self-love was the first spring of man's apostacy from God ; that his first advances is returning to God, are made by self-denial. If self-love is acknowledged to be a leading principle among dependent beings, then it will follow, that there is such an unintelligible thing as a creature made by God, and yet not for God and his glory, but for itself and its own private interest ; that the creature is its own ultimate happiness, as well as its ultimate end : seeing no created being, in a course of action, can arrive at a greater happiness, than to attain the ultimate end of all its actions. And to love God chiefly as good to us, is to love him chiefly for ourselves, and so to love ourselves more than God ; than which nothing can be more impious, and contradictory to the principles of religion, whether natural or revealed.

In fine, a prevailing respect to the glory of God, did most conspicuously appear in the whole course of our Redeemer's obedience ; who herein has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. It is a bold and daring reflection upon our glorious EMMA-NUEL, to say, that he neither did, nor could, prefer God's glory to his own greatest happiness, and his reigning gloriously at God's right hand. And that a respect to this, his own happiness, was the highest principle, which moved him to undertake and undergo his sufferings. We know, that " for the joy set before him, he endured the cross." But this did not mainly include the exaltation of his human nature, but the glory of God, manifested in the salvation of the church, and in the accomplishment of all

the counsels of God †. It is certain, that the glory of God was the high and noble end, designed to be attained by the obedience and death of the Son of God. And will any adventure to say, that the only wise God our Saviour, had not the highest respect to the highest and most noble end? No, we may assert it, that this is the characteristic of fallen angels and apostate men, that remain in the ruins of their natural state. Our Lord himself declares, that it was, because the holiness, mercy, justice, and faithfulness of God, could not be otherwise illustrated in the salvation of sinners, than by the interposition of a divine person, that he voluntarily acquiesced in the will of the Father, to assume our nature, and to give his life a ransom for many, Psal. xl. 7. Heb. x. 6. 7. The Son of God, as such, can receive no addition to his glory, because it is infinite; and it was as the Son of God, that, from eternity, he undertook to become the Son of man, and to suffer in our nature. And the greatest dignity and glory the human nature is advanced to, doth consist in, and flow from, its intimate union with the divine person of the Son. And there being, in the nature of things, an infinite distance betwixt finite and infinite, it is plain, to a demonstration, that the great God our Saviour had never condescended to this hypostatical union, upon any motive whatsoever, inferior to that of the manifestation of the glory of God, and of all the shining excellencies of the divine nature, in his undertaking, death, and mediation.

AND the same high motive, which moved our Lord Jesus to undertake, influenced him to undergo his sufferings. For, besides, that it is absurd to ima-

† Vide Dr Owen on the place.

gine, that he undertook to suffer from one leading principle, and underwent his sufferings from another, we find him declaring, in express terms, that he sought not his own glory, as his highest end, John viii. 50. and v. 34. : and speaking of it, in a very triumphant manner, as the most signal fruit of his whole ministry on earth, John v. 30. ; and of his approaching death, " Father, I have glorified thee on earth : " I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John xvii. 4.

AND further, it has been shown, that genuine love to God is ingrafted upon this very principle, of a prevailing respect to the glory of God ; and none can doubt, that our Saviour's love to his Father was most genuine and perfect. It has likewise been made appear, that a respect to the glory of God, in celebrating his super-eminent excellencies, is the chief motive of religious worship : and nothing is more certain, than that our Lord Jesus, in his human nature, performed the most perfect worship to God ; by which he was inconceivably more glorified, than by the obedience and adoration of all the hosts of angels, since ever the world began. All which make it very manifest, that our Lord Jesus, in undertaking and undergoing his sufferings, and in the whole course of his obedience, was mainly acted from a respect to the glory of God. And, in the last of these, he has left us a pattern, to be followed by us, with veneration, in the whole of our Christian course.

I CANNOT but upon this occasion observe, that they have done but small service to mankind, who have laid the foundation of moral virtue †, in an in-

† Mr Campbell's inquiry into moral virtue.

ordinate self-love; a vice condemned both by natural and revealed religion! It were a laudable design, no doubt, to promote religion and virtue among men; holiness being absolutely necessary to our happiness, both in a present and future state. But why should not we found it upon its own proper basis and foundation, laid open to every capacity in the scriptures of truth? For, if morality is not ingrafted upon the principles of the gospel, if it do not proceed from a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and from a supreme love to God, and a respect to his authority and will, made known to us by his law, and if it is not animated by daily influences from Christ, the Head of his body the church, it is not gospel-holiness; nay, nor any thing else, but a wild chimera, that exists no where, but in some verbose and airy harangues upon these subjects. And so imaginary is this superstructure, and no wonder it be such, among those who have the benefit of divine revelation, that the builders are not agreed among themselves about the foundation; some founding the whole in a public good ||, and others in self-love, and private interest.

WE are likewise taught in the holy scriptures, that Christian congregations have a right to elect their own pastors and overseers.

THEIR right in this, appears from the election of Matthias, Acts i.; who, though he was to bear an extraordinary character, yet, as he was to be an officer in the church of Christ, he had the choice and consent of the church, that his election might be a precedent in future ages. It is true, they did not

nominate the individual person; but this was, not because they were not the source of election, but because God's immediate determination, of one of the two they had chosen, was necessary to constitute the character of an apostle, whose call to that office behoved to be some way immediate.

AND Christian congregations, by apostolical practice, have right to chuse their deacons, the distributors of their charity, because of their interest therein, Acts vi.; and therefore they ought much more to enjoy this privilege in the choice of their pastors, unto whom they commit the inspection and care of their souls. It is long since Bellarmine objected; that this argument doth not conclude; because greater knowledge is required to judge of the qualifications of pastors than of deacons. But we find, from the context, that they were to "look out for men that were of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom;" and these are main branches of the scripture-character of pastors. And seeing the church of Christ are these, to whom the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed, when they are hid from the wise and prudent, they may be supposed, in some measure, qualified to chuse those who are to dispense these mysteries among them. And if they happen to fall into mistakes, they may be remedied by the presbytery, who have a right to try and judge of the qualifications of the candidates for that sacred office, and in whom alone the power of ordination resides. And it is plain, that the right of election naturally resides in them that have the greatest interest in the person chosen. One Diogenes, perhaps, had more skill to chuse fit magistrates than all the Athenians; yet the right of election was not in him, but in the Athenians themselves, because of their common inte-

rest in their governors. And our Lord tells us, "that his people know his voice, and follow him;" and commands them to "try the spirits whether they are of God;" and to "beware of false prophets." All which suppose, that he hath furnished his church with necessary abilities, to chuse such as are to be set over them in the Lord.

AND farther, this principle is confirmed from the practice of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, their ordaining presbyters, by the suffrages of the churches over which they set them, Acts xiv. 23. * The word *χειροτονεσθαι* had its rise from the ancient custom of the Grecians, who, in their election of magistrates, used to give their suffrages by stretching out their hands. Amesius says, that Bellarmine himself owns, that this of electing by suffrages, is the only proper and native signification of the word †. It is true, notwithstanding of this concession, he would have *χειρονομια* to be put for *χειροτονια*. But a judicious Protestant answers ‡, That if this had been the case, the evangelist had been a barbarian to these he wrote unto; for at that time the word was not so used in any author, whether sacred or profane.

It is manifest, that this was the received principle of the Christian church, in its first and purest ages ||; and of this church, both in ancient and later

* Beza renders the text, *Quumque ipsis per suffragia creassent per singulas ecclesias presbyteros*. And so Pagnius, Vatablus, Erasmus, and others, render the word. And Dr Hill tells us, that this text, among others, was corrupted by the revisers of our English translation.

† Bellarm. Enerv. p. 97. ‡ Mr Bowles.

§ See Sir Peter King's enquiry into the constitution of the primitive church.

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times. From the year 205, when this nation first professed the Christian faith, till the time of Palladius, our pastors were chosen out of the monks and Culdees, by the suffrages of the people *. And this was manifestly the principle of our reformers †, and of Calvin ‡, and other great men, in the reformed churches abroad. This church has declared her sentiments, for the right of Christian congregations, in this particular, in her books of discipline, and acts of assembly ||; and so have other reformed churches, in their confessions, and canons of discipline §.

From all which it is very manifest, that it is altogether unlawful and unwarrantable in any church, to deprive Christian congregations of that power, to which they have both a divine and natural right, and to lodge it in heritors as such. And, for the same reasons, we must look upon patronages as an heavy grievance *, and which of late is become more insupportable than ever. And for this, we have not our most gracious and only rightful sovereign King George to blame: nay, nor the law itself, so much as the conduct of some of our own judicatories, inferior or more supreme. It were therefore to be wished, that we would prudently improve the advantages offered us by the law, in the mollifying act 1719: and likewise make the best we can, of the right reserved

* *Boethius, Lib. 7. c. 128.* Sir James Dalrymple, Col. p. 111. 133.

† See Buchan, *Lib. 16.*

‡ *Inst. Christ. Rel. Lib. 4. c. 5. § 2. et c. 3. § 15.*

|| See acts of Assembly, December 20. 1560, and act of Assembly 1567, cited, Account of Lay-patron. in Scotland, p. 2. and acts of Assembly, 1638. 1649.

§ See *Jus papali divinum*, &c. by Mr Curry.

* See Park upon patronages.

by the patronage-act itself, in terms of the act 1690, unto Christian congregations to assent to, or dissent from the person nominate by the patron, and the reasons of dissent to be judged by the presbytery of the bounds. And why should we not, in the most humble manner, represent this grievance to our gracious Sovereign, who, as the father of his people, will no doubt take pleasure in doing us kindness, and in relieving such a considerable body of his subjects, as is the church of Scotland, most firmly attached to his Majesty's interest, and to the Protestant succession in his most illustrious family, from what is most grievous and afflicting to her; and which, if continued, must very soon issue in her utter ruin and desolation?

II. WE now proceed to shew what is imported in this duty of contending earnestly for the faith. The word, in the first language, we observed, is exceeding strong, signifying to contend, as in an agony, or with the greatest intention of mind. And our thus contending for the faith,

I. IMPORTETH, that the doctrine of the faith in Christ is most precious and valuable in itself. Hence we are commanded "to buy the truth, and not to "sell it" at any price, as being a most invaluable treasure. Gospel-truth is an emanation from the Father of lights, manifesting the essential perfections of the supreme Being in the clearest manner, and unfolding the free purposes of his will, and the mysteries of his grace and love. The great God our Saviour assumed our nature, that he might purchase the blessings exhibited and conveyed by this word of truth, that he might bear witness to the truth, and instruct us in it; and, by the miracles he wrought in his life, and the blood he poured out at his death, he gave us

the strongest confirmations of it. - And the noblest end, the glory of God in the salvation of the souls of men, is advanced or impaired, as we retain it, or let it slip. For it is the great mean of the renovation and sanctification of our natures, of fellowship with God here in duties and ordinances, and to direct and prepare us for the full enjoyment of him hereafter, John xvii. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Rom. i. 16. And therefore the defence of the gospel is not a trivial, but the most weighty and honourable cause we can possibly be engaged in.

2. It importeth, that the truth, as it is in Jesus, hath had many enemies in all ages, who have endeavoured to bear it down, and to oppose such as maintained it. Satan stirred up Hymeneus and Alexander, and other adversaries, to oppose the gospel of truth, preached by the apostle Paul; and we find him (Acts xx. 29.—) warning the elders of Ephesus of their danger that way. And the apostle John penned his gospel, as for other reasons, so with a particular view to confound the errors of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, of the Nicolaitans and the Gnostics, which even then began to spread in the church. The heresy of Ebion and Cerinthus, subverting that great truth of our Lord's Deity, was afterwards revived by Arius, and others. Nestorius attacked the unity of his person, and Eutychus the distinction of his natures. And Noetus, with his disciple Sabellius, denied three distinct persons in the Godhead, and affirmed they were but three names. But as instances of this sort are innumerable, so we are assured that they made their first advances by fraud and dissimulation: our apostle tells us, "they crept in unawares;" and it is well known, with what violence and persecution

they managed matters, when it was in the power of their hands.

3. THIS earnest contention implieth some considerable strength, whereby to maintain the conflict with such powerful adversaries. Our strength for this, as likewise for every duty, consisteth in the vigour of inward grace, animated by daily supplies from our exalted Head Christ Jesus. Such as the knowledge, faith, and love of the truth as it is in Jesus, discovering themselves in a holy and Christian life. And this strength we must exert and put forth, in enduring all conflicts for the cause of truth, and in using all appointed means for its preservation and defence. And all this must be managed, in a dependence upon Christ for strength and sufficiency; for it is only if we begin all in his name, and proceed in his help, that we may hope to end for his praise. And this leads me,

III. To discourse briefly of the means, in the use of which, the followers of Jesus are obliged, in their different characters, to contend for this faith of the gospel; and,

1. CHRISTIAN magistrates, in their characters, are to maintain and defend the faith in Christ. We do not mean that they are to propagate the religion of Jesus, by sword, fire, and faggot, but that Christian states are to employ their power and authority, for support of the worship and service of God, as well as for regulating our behaviour to our fellow-creatures. Both precepts and examples under the Old Testament, are strong and clear to this purpose; and these were not temporary laws, but founded upon perpetual and moral grounds, such as the peace of societies; the good of mens souls; the duty of all de-

pendent beings, to pay homage to their Creator, in the manner himself has prescribed ; and the duty of all magistrates, the ministers and delegates of the great God, to vindicate and maintain his honour among men. Was it not a moral and binding duty upon Adam, Abel, Enoch, and the ancient patriarchs, magistrates, and princes, in their numerous families, to restrain their children and servants from blaspheming God, breaking his sabbaths, and a profane neglect of his worship, as well as from oppressing one another ? Job tells us, that, in his time, idolatry, and contempt of God, was a crime punished by the judges, no less than injuries done to their fellow-creatures, (Job xxxi.) Now Job lived before the days of Moses ; and therefore this law, which was in force in his time, could not be borrowed from the ceremonial or judicial law, but must be looked upon as moral in its nature. And we find it foretold of Christian magistrates, that they shall protect the church of Christ, as a father his children ; which must imply their taking care of the worship of the true God, and maintaining, in their own station, the truths of the gospel. For Heathen governors take care of what relates to human society, as well as Christian magistrates ; and seeing they are to restrain men from doing mischief to one another, why not from impiety against God, and contempt of his worship, without a regard to which, peace and honesty can no more subsist among professed Christians, than a building can stand without a foundation ? No doubt magistrates have mistaken error for truth, and made a bad use of their power upon many occasions : but if the abuse of a power take away the lawful use of it, mankind will be in a strange and unheard-of situation ! And it will be owned, that private persons may mistake error for truth, as well as men in autho-

riety, and yet they are enjoined, by the Spirit of God, to receive none into their houses who bring false doctrine, (2 John 10.) under the pains of being partakers of their evil deeds. And may not the Christian magistrate, by the same rule, exclude heretics and seducers from all houses within his dominions? But I am not to enter upon this argument; only I must add, that it seems to be a principle chocking to common understanding, that Christian states must tolerate blasphemers and seducers, to turn away their dearest friends and best subjects from the faith, to the ruin of their souls, without any restraint, but by exhorting them to refrain from it. However, this is but a mere amusement, common to all that innovate in the faith, by which they seem to mean nothing more, but that their own liberty is not to be abridged, whatever become of every man's else. The Arians seemed to be great friends to toleration, and patriots of liberty; yet, when they got power in their hands, they raised a more hot persecution against the orthodox, than any of the Pagan emperors did against the Christians. Athanasius describes, at large, their more than beastly cruelty, against all sexes and ages; and concludes, that he had said less than their inhumanity deserved, because it exceeded all expressions.

2. THE ministers of Christ are, in an especial manner, called upon to maintain and defend the purity of the Christian doctrine, Phil. i. 17. Eph. iv. 11. 14. They are placed by Christ in his house, for the defence of the gospel; and were given to the church, for this end, among others, that the flock of Christ might not be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. And they are to maintain the doctrine of the faith in Christ,

(1.) By preaching the things which become sound doctrine, and taking care to have their hearers established in the truth as it is in Jesus, Tit. ii. 1. 1 Thess. iii. 2. And according to the apostle's exhortation to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx. 29. 30. 31. they are to watch themselves, and give warning to their people of the attempts of seducers, who creep in craftily, and lie in wait to deceive. And by sound doctrine they are to exhort and convince gainsayers, refuting their perverse tenets from the holy scriptures, the only foundation and rule of our faith, Tit. i. 9.

(2.) It likewise belongs to gospel-ministers, assembled in synods, in the name of Christ, the only head of the church, to determine articles of faith from the holy scriptures, and to condemn the errors which are spreading in their own times. ()

THIS is confirmed, from the example of the first synod, which met at Jerusalem in the days of the apostles, Acts xv.; the decrees of which were delivered to, and received by all the churches. And their determinations, founded on the scriptures, are to be standards and tests of soundness in the faith, to which they are to take all engaged, whom they admit to ministerial communion, 2 Tim. i. 13. The apostle Paul tells us, that it is the duty of ministers to hold fast the form of sound * words; which plainly supposeth, that a form, or summary of the Christian faith, may warrantably be drawn up and composed; and none can better undertake this work, than the ministers of Christ, assembled for that end, and acting in the manner he has prescribed in his word. And further, according to the apostle's directory, none are to be ordained to the ministry but such as are faithful

* Vide Leigh's critica sacra.

men, 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 9. †, who hold fast the faithful word, and are sound in the faith; and this cannot be observed without some standard, by which their soundness is to be tried. No doubt, the scriptures themselves are the only foundation and rule of faith; and if all that professed a regard to them, understood them in the same sense, there were no occasion for any other test of orthodoxy. But this was not the case in the very days of the apostles, and far less can it be expected now. We find (Acts viii.) that before Philip admitted his young convert so much as to Christian communion, he required of him a confession of his faith; and it was not sufficient for him to say that he believed the Old Testament, the only canon of scripture then extant, to be the word of God: this was acknowledged by the priests, and all the Jews, who notwithstanding crucified the Lord of glory; but he professes his faith as to the sense and meaning of the scriptures, that the ancient prophecies, types, and promises, were all now accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth; that he was Jesus, a Saviour from sin, and its direful effects; that as to office, he was the Messiah; and as to his person, he was the Son of the Father, by an eternal, necessary, and ineffable generation. I shall only further observe, that, by the foresaid apostolical directory, none were to be admitted to the inferior office of deacons, but such as held the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, 1 Tim. iii. 9. And this confirmeth our argument as to ministers, who bear a superior character in the church. From all which it appears, that gospel-ministers are enjoined, by their Lord and Master, to admit none to bear

† *προς ανθρωποις.* Quotiescunque pro homine Christiano vocabulum *προς* usurpari occurrit — toties necesse est fatemur, eum denotare, qui credit aut fidem adhibet Deo, ut Job. 29. 27. Fuller. miscel. l. 1. c. 19.

office in his house, but such as give all necessary satisfaction as to the soundness of their faith; which cannot possibly be done, without some test or standard for that purpose. Rufinus † and some of the ancients have advanced, that the apostles made a creed before they separated. But whatever be of this, it is certain that the council of Nice, and others upon the like occasions, found it necessary to compose confessions of their faith, and to exclude such from ministerial communion, who refused to subscribe and acknowledge them. And this conduct cannot be loaded with imposing new terms of communion, seeing, as has been shown, it is warranted from the holy scriptures. And no man's right can possibly be invaded, nor the liberty of his conscience infringed, by hindering him to preach the faith which he doth not believe, or from venting pernicious principles to his own condemnation, and the ruin of others. For no man can possibly have any better right to reproach the Author of his being, and seduce his fellow-creatures from the truth as it is in Jesus, in which their life and eternal felicity is wrapt up, than he can have a right to defame, oppress, or murder his neighbour, John xvii 3. We know that councils have erred, and so have civil magistrates, in laying down rules for human society; the Spartans permitted their youth to steal, and other states have established iniquity by a law. And is it therefore fit that we have no laws as to social life, till we get infallible legislators? And though church-judicatories are fallible, yet the holy scriptures upon which they are to proceed, are an infallible rule, both perfect and plain in all things necessary to salvation. And if they are single in their aims, humble and self-denied in their conduct, they

† Dupin. compend. hist. V. 1. p. 326.

may lay claim to the infallible promise of the holy Spirit of God, to lead them into all truth, and to guard them against dangerous mistakes. And this, we think, is sufficient to animate and encourage Christ's servants to do their duty, and to oblige all to pay a due regard to their just power and authority.

(3.) MINISTERS of the gospel met in church-judicatories, are likewise to inflict censures upon seducers and false teachers. The scripture is plain as to this, Tit. iii. 10. "An heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." And Gal. i. 9. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." According to this rule, the apostle Paul delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. And we find that the church of Pergamos is blamed for tolerating them, that held the doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans, and Thyatira is condemned for suffering Jezebel to teach. Whereas Ephesus is commended for her zeal in censuring and suppressing false teachers. From all which it is manifest, that church-judicatories ought to inflict censures upon false teachers, adequate to the crimes which have been found proven against them: And that, in order to bring them to a deep and serious exercise of repentance for their sin and impiety, to shew the church's abhorrence of the errors they have vented; to vindicate truth, and the honour of God, and to brand error with infamy *in terrorem* to others.

I SHALL only add further, that ministers, in their character, are witnesses to the truth, Acts xxvi. 16. 22.: and therefore, when the truths of God are sub-

verted, they are to support them by the word of their testimony, whatever sufferings they may be exposed to upon that account. John, the beloved disciple, was banished to the isle Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus, Rev. i.; where he had the most refreshing fellowship with God, and was made most useful to the church in after-ages, both by his writings and sufferings there. But,

3. ALL the saints, all private Christians, are to defend the faith, in the use of some means, in common with those that are in power and authority. And,

(1.) ACCORDING to the apostle Paul, his direction to the Philippians, chap. i. 27. they are to "strive together for the faith of the gospel," by leading holy lives, and maintaining a "conversation suitable to the gospel of Christ." And the same apostle assures us, that if "these who have believed in God" are not "careful to maintain good works," their knowledge of Christ is but "barren and unfruitful," Tit. iii. 8. 14.; than which nothing can be a greater reproach to their profession, nor an higher indignity done the Lord Jesus, who came not "to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."

(2.) THEY are to pray for the success of the faith against error, that "the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified," Eph. vi. 19.; that, for this end, "God would send forth labourers into his harvest," Matth. ix. 38.; and that when the truths of God are attacked and subverted, "utterance may be given to" the ministers of Christ, to "speak boldly as they ought to speak," 2 Thess. iii. 1. Private Christians, who can thus prevail with God,

shall be useful instruments in "contending for the "faith" of Christ, which hath obtained greater victories against error by prayer than disputation.

(3.) THEY are to confess the truth, when called unto it. The apostle Paul tells us, that it is not enough to "believe with the heart," but that likewise "with the mouth" we must confess Christ and his truth, Rom. x. 10. This confession of him, importeth in it a profession of him and his gospel, in the face of opposition and enemies; and to this we are encouraged by the strongest of arguments; for our Lord saith, "Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I "confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matth. xvi. 31. On the other hand, we are warned, that "if we deny him, he will also deny us," 2 Tim. ii. 12.

(4.) By suffering for the truth of the gospel. The apostles rejoiced that they "were counted worthy to "suffer shame for the name of Christ," Acts v. 41. And Paul was "ready not only to be bound, but to "die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus," Acts xxi. 31. And the primitive Christians "took joyfully "the spoiling of their goods," Heb. x. 34.; and "loved not their lives unto the death," Rev. xii. 11. Church-history abounds with instructing instances of the faith, resolution, and exemplary piety of confessors and martyrs, in all periods of the church. I shall only, upon this occasion, put you in remembrance of the great and noble Argyle, the worthy Waristoun, and the eminent Mr Guthrie, once a bright light in this place, from which I have the honour, in the name of Christ, to address you.

I SHALL now conclude this discourse, by exhort-

ing all that "love our Lord Jesus in-sincerity," in their different characters, "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And in particular, my reverend brethren and fathers, let us, who bear the honourable character of the ministers of Jesus, be encouraged in this necessary duty, when we consider,

1. THAT our Lord has promised us his Holy Spirit, "to lead us into all truth," John xvi. and to be with us, in the great work to which he hath called us, and in all the conflicts we may be engaged in, for his cause and interest, Matth. xxviii. 20.; and has pledged his faithfulness, that "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" and that if we "keep the word of his patience, he will keep us in the hour of temptation;" and in the issue give us a crown of life, and the possession of "a kingdom that cannot be moved."

2. LET us consider, that errors and heresies are most destructive and pernicious to the souls of men; Paul enumerates them among "the works of the flesh," which exclude men from the kingdom of God, Gal. v. 20. 21.; Peter calls them "damnable heresies," which entail upon the promoters and propagators of them "swift and eternal perdition," 2 Pet. ii. 1.; and Jude, in the context, says of seducers, that they "are wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." They only delude themselves, who imagine * that errors are not damnable, because they are the effect of a mistaken judgment, and not of a vicious mind: for error never yet lodged any where else but in a vicious mind; and Paul's

* Chubb's Tract of persecution.

mistaken judgment did not make him innocent, in reproaching the Son of God ; he himself owns, after his conversion, that, in so doing, he was “ injurious, “ a blasphemer,” and “ the chief of sinners,” 1 Tim. i. 13. 15. And certainly every sin, and especially this, which is here affirmed to be of the most heinous nature, deserveth eternal damnation.

3. LET us consider, that of the mercy of God, “ the day spring from on high did visit” this land, in an early dawning of gospel-light * ; and that the hand of God did most remarkably appear, in beginning and carrying on our glorious reformation, to as great a pitch of purity in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, as any reformed church whatsoever. And let us farther reflect upon our ministerial vows and engagements, and the inviolable ties we are under, by our covenants, national and solemn league, to maintain purity of doctrine, to promote reformation in our respective stations, and to walk closely with God. And that the truths of God are a sacred *depositum*, 1 Tim. vi. 20. committed to our trust by our Lord and Master ; and that they have been handed down to us, by the blood and treasure of the greatest saints, and most eminent patriots for religion and liberty ; and that therefore we must look upon ourselves as obliged, in the most vigorous manner, to preserve them pure and entire, and to transmit them faithfully to posterity.

AND that we may manage this work the more

* Our historian Buchanan says, *Scoti ex discipulis Joannis apostoli Christianismum edocti sunt. Lib. 5.* And Tertullian, a writer in the second century, says, *Evangelium fuit diffusum in omnis orbis partes, etiam in Britanniam, usque eamque insula partem, ad quam Romana vires nunquam penetrarunt. Lib. contra Judeos.*

38 *The duty of contending for the faith.*

ſucceſſfully, let us receive the doctrine of faith in Chriſt, by a divine faith, founded upon the authority and veracity of God ſpeaking in his word *. And let us contend for the faith of the goſpel with meekneſs and Chriſtian temper, 2 Tim. i. 24. 25.; and in a regular and orderly manner, every man, whether magiſtrates, miniſters, or private perſons, acting that part only which God has preſcribed in his word. Let us be ſingle in our ends in all our undertakings, eſpecially theſe of this kind, which are of the higheſt conſequence to the glory of God, the peace of our minds, and the welfare of poſterity; doing nothing without a warrant from the command and authority of God, and managing all in a dependence upon his promiſe for grace and ſtrength. In ſine, let the love of God be the prevailing and leading principle in the whole of our conduct, the only true foundation of Chriſtian charity to our brethren, and of benevolence and kindneſs to all mankind; and maintain daily fellowſhip and communion with God through Jeſus Chriſt, by faith and prayer; which, according to our apoſtle's directory, is of ſingular uſe, for managing this duty of contending for the faith, Jude 20. "But ye, beloved, building up
 "yourſelves in your moſt holy faith, praying in the
 "Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelves in the love of God,
 "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt un-
 "to eternal life."

WE conclude with our apoſtle's doxology, "Now
 "unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and
 "to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his
 "glory, with exceeding joy: to the only wiſe God
 "our Saviour, be glory and majeſty, dominion and
 "power, both now and ever. Amen."

* See Dr Owen, *Reaſon of faith*, p. 71. &c.

The GLORY of EMMANUEL;

AND,

The DESOLATION of EMMANUEL's land, for the SINS of them that dwell therein.

Considered and applied in

TWO SERMONS.



The GLORY of EMMANUEL.

ISAIAH viii. 7. 8.

Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow, and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O EMMANUEL.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

[The first discourse on this subject.]

IN the beginning of this eighth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, we have a prediction of the invasion the king of Assyria was to make, not only upon Sy-

ria and Israel, but Judah likewise, as a just judgment from the Lord, for their idolatry, and other abounding sins.

THE prophet is commanded to write this prophecy with a man's pen in a roll, that all might read it, and have warning of God's judgments before they approached.

THE name he was to impose upon this prophecy, was the same he was to give to the Son to be born unto him, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which signifies, "Make speed to the spoil," or, "Hasten to the prey;" thus warning them that the invasion should be sudden and surprising, and attended with much spoil to the enemy, and that the whole land should be laid desolate by their numerous host.

THE stroke was at hand, and near the door, ver. 4. "For, before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."

AND the stroke was to fall upon Judah, as well as upon Syria and Israel, ver. 6. "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son: now therefore the Lord bringeth upon them the king of Assyria and all his glory."

THE reason is given why Judah shall meet with this calamity, because "they refuse the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son."

THIS Shiloah was a small river that did run by Jerusalem ; and by their despising or refusing it, is meant, their contempt of the spiritual blessings they enjoyed, their wearying of that government God had instituted for them to live under, and their disregarding the promises and prophecies, that Shiloh was to come of the tribe of Judah, and to sit and rule upon the throne of David ; and they are condemned for preferring worldly pomp, grandeur, and greatness, which they observed appearing in Rezin and Remaliah's son, to the spiritual glory of the kingdom of Christ, and for shewing a disposition to forego the pure worship of God, and fall in with their idolatry and superstition..

AND seeing, like the present age and generation wherein we live, they had lost all sight and impression of things spiritual and eternal, and their eyes were dazzled with worldly pomp and glory, God tells them they should have enough of it, that he would send among them, as a scourge, the Assyrian, with all his glory.

IN the eighth verse, we have an account of the invasion to be made upon Judah. And,

FIRST, We may notice the description that is given of the public calamity that was to come upon EMMANUEL's land, by the invasion of a foreign enemy. It is described, 1. From the nature of it ; it was to be of the nature of a flood, deluge, and inundation, most terrible, dangerous, and destructive to the inhabitants of the land of EMMANUEL. 2. It is described from the extent and universality of it ; it was to pass through the whole land of Judah, to come up over all his channels, to overflow all his banks ;

and the stretching out of the wings of the Assyrian, that bird of prey, the stretching out of the right and left wings of the army of Sennacherib, was to fill the breadth of the land of EMMANUEL. 3. In these words, we have a mitigation of the severity of this flood of threatened judgments, in a word of comfort to the pious and exercised remnant among them : it was to reach even to the neck, and be a full trial to their faith ; but there its proud waves were to be stayed ; the flood was not to go over their head ; their spiritual life, and eternal concerns, were to be in safe custody, being laid up in Christ, who is exalted above all principality and power, and the reach of all enemies ; and though some of them might fall in the common calamity, yet many of them were to be preserved and get safe through this flood, that they might declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem.

SECONDLY, In the other place of scripture, we have the glory of EMMANUEL presented to our view ; “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” His glory is a divine glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father ; he is the Son of God by an eternal, necessary, and ineffable generation. And it is an encouragement to the sons of men to look to him and be saved, that he is full of grace and truth.

HE is EMMANUEL, and his church is called the land of EMMANUEL, because in it the pure worship of God and his ordinances are observed ; and because of his interest in it, he is Lord and King of EMMANUEL’s land, which is his free and independent kingdom,

God having set him as King over Zion, the hill of his holiness.

EMMANUEL is a name given to the Messiah, II. vii. 14. Mat. i. 23. and being interpreted, *is God with us*. He is God in our nature: "for unto us a child is born, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, and, The Prince of peace," II. ix. 6. And he is "God with us," God on our side, taking our part, the Mediator betwixt God and us, approaching God with an atonement for us as our Priest, giving light and teaching to us, as our Prophet, and sanctifying us, as our King.

He is "God with us," dwelling with us, and in our nature. The *Word*, who was with God in the beginning, and who himself is properly and truly God; the *Word*, by whom all things were made, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The word flesh in scripture, is often used to signify the entire human nature, consisting both of soul and body: "The Word was made flesh;" that is, he took the human nature into an intimate and real union with his divine person. To what an height of honour has he raised our nature, by making it the temple of the Deity, the habitation of eternal wisdom? By this the glorious Majesty of heaven is become related, in a surprising manner, to the despicable race of mortal man; for now, "both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11.

AND we "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The apostle John, and all the followers

of Christ, had such bright discoveries of his glory, and so wonderful were the effects and evidences of it, as could not but convince them that he was really the Son of God. They saw the glory of the Deity appearing in, and shining from, the human nature, in which he dwelt among them, as in a tabernacle, as the glory of the Lord did from the tabernacle of old, by which he testified his presence there: and, by the beams of glory that darted through the vail of his humanity, it was evident that Christ could be no other than "the only begotten of the Father," the "true God," and "eternal life."

FROM these words we observe,

I. "THAT the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great EMMANUEL, is an infinite and an ineffable glory."

II. WE observe, "That the Lord sometimes sends the desolating judgments, a flood of public calamities, upon a nation and people called by his name, the inhabitants of EMMANUEL's land, for the sins and provocations of them that dwell therein."

FIRST, WE proceed, in this discourse, to consider the first doctrinal proposition; and shall endeavour, through divine assistance, I. To shew that the glory of EMMANUEL is a great and an ineffable glory. II. To make some practical improvement of this subject.

FIRST, I. We shall shew, that the glory of EMMANUEL is an infinite and ineffable glory.

1. HE is the brightness of glory, and the express image of his Father's person: he is the Lord of glory, and the King of glory; and his throne is a throne of glory: he hath purchased glory, and giveth both grace and glory; and he is our God, our

glory. And that the glory of EMMANUEL is a great and an ineffable glory, will appear, if we consider him,

(1.) As to his divine nature, he is a Being of infinite perfection; all perfections are found in him, and none can set bounds to terminate his excellency and perfection: he is the God of glory, who appeared to Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. And behold, God is great, and we know him not, and his greatness is unsearchable!

AND as we are to guard against the extremes, both of Tritheism and Sabellianism; so we are to conceive of the Son of God, as one in essence, or of the same individual substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and as the most high God, and the only living and true God, as well as the Father; and therefore a Being of infinite perfection.

OUR EMMANUEL is the Supreme Being; for when he made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Heb. iv. 13. Gen. xxii. 11. 12. 15. He is the Origin and Fountain of all being, and hath being from none; and he is self-existent, and all other beings are derived from him, Exod. iii. 14. "Say unto the children of Israel, *I AM* hath sent me unto you." His being is for himself, and he is his own end, and all other beings are for him, and for his glory; for "all things were created by him, and for him." His being is independent, and all other beings depend upon him; for "in him they live, and move, and have their being," and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. And he is an infinite Being, and therefore he is incomprehensible; it being impossible that

an infinite Being can be comprehended by finite minds.

AND how glorious is our EMMANUEL, if, by faith, we contemplate the lustre and resplendent glory of his attributes and perfections, his immensity, eternity, omniscience, and other divine excellencies! And if we likewise consider, that his glory is an original glory, which he doth not derive from another, but hath it from and of himself; and that he is the fountain of all that glory and perfection which is scattered up and down among the creatures: all that glory that may be observed upon the face of the creation, upon angels and men, is but a faint beam from that fountain of glory and perfection. And his glory is an essential glory; there is nothing in him but what is glorious; for he is the God of glory: it is an unchangeable and everlasting glory, and an incomprehensible and infinite glory: it is a light no man can approach unto: if any creature search boldly into it, he will be overpowered and swallowed up by it. A faint ray of his glory, darted on Moses' face, made it shine so illustriously, that the Israelites were afraid to come near him; and the brightness of his glory dazzles the eyes of the very angels, and would overwhelm their created faculties, did they not cover their faces with their wings, Is. vi. Thus the glory of our EMMANUEL is above the earth and heaven; and in his glory he is exalted above all blessing and praise, Psal. civ. 31. Neh. ix. 5.

How incomprehensible is the glory of our EMMANUEL! We cannot comprehend the nature of his works, nor search out the creatures that are finite and near us, and in our view; how much less him that is infinite! He lets out but little of himself in the manifestations he makes of himself to created

beings, because their weak capacities can bear little, Job xxvi. 9. 14. "He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.—Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!"—or, as the Vulgar renders it, "How little a drop!" Is. xl. 17. All nations before him are as a drop of the bucket, the small dust of the balance, less than nothing, and vanity. It is but a drop that is let out by manifestation, the full flood would drown and overwhelm created minds: or, as others render it, "How little a whisper is heard of him!" When God speaks of his glory in the ears of created beings, he expresseth himself in a small whisper; for a clear and full voice would break all their created organs at once. Angels have, these thousands of years, been studying his glorious excellencies; but when they have said all they can to his praise, they must break off with this abrupt exclamation, "Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him!"

THE beatific vision itself, and the immediate manifestation of the glory of our EMMANUEL to the redeemed from among men, and to the crowd of angels that surround his throne, will not make them fully to comprehend his ineffable glory: for, though they shall behold him face to face, and see him as he is, and have a perfect knowledge of him, so far as their created faculties can reach; yet there never will, nor can be any proportion betwixt an infinite glory, the object of their light, and their finite understandings. The enlarged capacities of angels will not be able fully to comprehend the glory of our EMMANUEL, the King of glory, the Lord, the God of glory: hence God is represented, in Ezekiel's vision, as sitting above the heads of the cherubims, (Ezek. i.)

because he is infinitely above the fulness and brightness of an angelical understanding.

AND the glory of our EMMANUEL, being infinite and ineffable, it must eclipse and throw a vail upon all created glory and excellency, when it is apprehended by faith, "the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for." All created excellency is derived from him; his is uncreated and underived. Moses excelled for meekness, and Job for patience; but all perfections and excellencies centre in Christ, even as all rivers meet in the sea: and he is a sea of delights, an ocean of perfection and sweetness, without one drop of gall. Creature-excellency is fading; but his is fresh to all eternity, the ever-green of Heaven, ever fresh and blooming, (Heb. xiii. 8. Job iv. 21.) Created excellency is dangerous; we may idolize an excellent creature; but we are never better than when we are sick of love to Christ. The nearer we approach the creature, we observe the more defects, and our estimation abates; but the nearer the soul approacheth Christ, still the more lovely and desirable he is: and no created thing can give rest and full satisfaction to the soul; but a sight of the glory of Christ gives full rest and satisfaction to it. Good old Simeon had a waff of his glory, (Luke ii. 29. ;) and he prays that his eyes may be closed by death, that he might never see another sight: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.— A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." And it is the main ingredient of the rest that remains for the people of God, that "his servants shall serve him, and see his face," Rev. xxii.

AND how great are the advantages of beholding the ineffable glory of our EMMANUEL? Virtue proceeds from this view, to change us into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Hereby we shall be made fit for heaven, meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. The contemplation of this glory will give rest, satisfaction, and complacency, to the souls that are employed therein; for "to be "spiritually-minded is life and peace." This keeps in a serene frame, taking off our hearts from an undue regard unto things below, in comparison of the worth, beauty, and glory of Christ. And the full sight of this glory of our EMMANUEL will be the spring and cause of our everlasting blessedness. Hence our Lord describes heaven by it, John xviii. 29. when he says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou "hast given me, be with me where I am, that they "may behold my glory which thou hast given me; "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the "world."

2. THAT the glory of Emmanuel is great and ineffable, will appear, if we consider the mysterious constitution of his person, as he is God and man in one and the same person. There are in him, in his one single individual person, two distinct natures; the one eternal, infinite, immense, and almighty, the form and essence of God; the other having a beginning in time, finite, limited, and confined to a certain place, which is our nature, and which he took on him when "he was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

He is "God manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16.: and though he was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh;" yet he "was declared to be "the Son of God with power, according to the Spi-

"rit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." He was in the form of God, a divine person; and yet took upon him the form of a servant, that is, the human nature, that in it he might fulfil all righteousness: and *his* glory is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, "made flesh, and dwelling among us."

It is the glory of our EMMANUEL, that he is the Son of the Father, by an eternal, necessary, and ineffable generation. In the second Psalm, verse 7th, and in the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, verse 22d, and downwards, we have the eternity of his generation asserted, and an account of eternal covenant-transactions between the Father and him; and he is so begotten of the Father, as to be of the same nature, and one in essence with him. He is called the only-begotten Son of God, by way of eminence and peculiarity, in the highest and most proper sense of the words; and his generation must therefore relate, not to his office, but to his nature, which he has in common with the Father. He is that only-begotten Son, who is one with the Father; "I and my Father are one:" and he is so essentially one with him, "that he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also." He called the Father his own proper Father, John v. 18.; thereby making himself equal with God, as the Jews rightly understand him. And he "is the Son of the living God," and "the Son of the Father in truth and love," truly partaking of his nature, and beloved of him. These scriptures can mean nothing else, but that the title of the *Son* of the *Father*, and of the *only-begotten*, is to be taken in as proper and natural a sense as possibly can be, to express the sameness of his nature with the Father.

AND however many have, and still do deny the per-

sonal union of these two distinct natures, in the mysterious person of our EMMANUEL ; yet there is not a truth of the gospel that is more expressly revealed in the scriptures, than this great mystery of godliness. And although this is that glory, whose beams are so illustrious, as that the blind world cannot bear the light and beauty of them ; yet wisdom has, and always will be justified of her children. And this glory is truly the glory of our religion, the glory of the church, and the sole rock whereon it is built, and the only spring of present grace and future glory.

3. THAT the glory of EMMANUEL is great and ineffable, will appear, if we consider him in his glorious fulness of grace : “ We beheld his glory, the “ glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full “ of grace and truth.”

HE is full of all habitual grace, as to his human nature ; which has received whatever might be suitable to the excellency of a nature, united personally to the Son of God, and all that might be necessary to the mediatorial office : and with respect to this, it is said concerning him, that God “ giveth not the Spirit by measure” unto him. Believers receive the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, according to the measure of the gift of Christ ; but Christ himself received him without measure : he was “ anointed with “ the oil of gladness above his fellows ;” and “ it “ pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in “ him,” as he is “ the Head of his body, the church.” His divine nature needed no anointing, to fit it for the discharge of his office, nor was capable of any such additional assistance for it ; but his human nature needed it, and was capable of it. The Son himself could have furnished his human nature for all the work

to which he was called, by virtue of his personal union with it; but as in the method of salvation, the human nature of Christ was to be formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, so it was proper he should have the glory of enriching that nature with all gifts and graces: and as Christ was sent by the Father to do his work and will; and he, by the Spirit, had prepared him a body for that purpose; it was proper he should give him all furniture, by the same Spirit, for the work to which he sent him: and in this way of procedure he gave testimony to Christ's authority, and shewed his approbation of him in his office, as it hereby appeared, that "God was with him," Acts x. 38. But although, in the œconomy of man's redemption, the anointing of the Messiah, and fitting his human nature with a fulness of grace, be peculiarly ascribed to the Holy Ghost; yet the Father and Son are not excluded from it, seeing all the operations of the divine persons, *ad extra*, are common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

AND as our EMMANUEL is glorious in that fulness of grace with which his human nature is filled; so, how great is his beauty, how great is his glory, in his grace, condescension, and love, that he, who was in the "form of God," emptied himself, assuming our nature, and taking upon him the "form of a servant?" Our EMMANUEL dwelleth on high, and he stoops and humbleth himself, when he condescends to give a look to the most shining seraphims that surround his throne: but what amazing condescension was it, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as to his divine nature, was infinitely perfect, and at an infinite distance from the whole creation, and was self-sufficient unto his own eternal blessedness, so that nothing could be added to him; that he not only gave

us a look, and bestowed a thought upon us in our low estate, but for our sakes descended into the lower parts of the earth, and took our nature upon him; took it to be his own, in order unto a discharge of the office of mediation on our behalf? He veiled the glory of his divine nature in ours, and so humbled himself, as to make himself of no reputation in this world; yea, unto that degree, that he said of himself, that he was "a worm, and no man," in comparison of them who were of any esteem. Unto the divine nature nothing is grievous, nothing is difficult: but our EMMANUEL was to assume another nature, wherein he was to undergo and feel the difficulties of his way and work; and yet how cheerfully doth he undertake to do and suffer! "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will." He was willing to pity and shew compassion to wretched miserable sinners, to that degree, that he had none left to pity himself; he would pursue his delight to save us, until his own soul was heavy and sorrowful unto death; and he would relieve us in our sufferings, by suffering the same things that we should have done. How glorious is the great EMMANUEL then in his grace, condescension, and love; if we consider the freedom of it, that "while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us;" and if we consider whose grace and love it is, namely, of the divine person of the Son of God? For "hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16. How glorious should he be in our eyes, when we consider, that, though he was in himself every way above law, yet he condescended to be "made of a woman," that is, to assume our nature, and thereby to "be made under the law, to redeem us who were under the law?" For him, who was Lord of all, thus to submit himself to universal obedience, discovereth the glorious grace and condescension of

the great EMMANUEL; and this obedience was not for himself, but for us: we were obliged unto it, and could not perform it; he was not obliged to it, any otherwise but by a free act of his own will, and did perform it: and herein is he glorious, that, "by his obedience, many are made righteous," Rom. v. 19. He wrought out this obedience against all difficulties and oppressions, lived over the moral law in the most perfect manner, "magnified it, and made it honourable," and glorified the holiness of God, represented in it in the most eminent manner, that he saith, "Father, I have glorified thee upon the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." And what a glory is there in the obedience of Christ, if we consider that the person who obeyed, was no other but the Son of God made man, God and man in one person! He who was in heaven, "Lord of all," at the same time lived in the Word, in the "form of a servant," and in a course of the strictest obedience unto the whole law of God: he, unto whom prayer was made, prayed himself night and day: he, whom all the angels of heaven worshipped, was continually exercised in all the duties of the worship of God. And how glorious is the great EMMANUEL, in undergoing and bearing that burden of guilt and punishment, which would have sunk us eternally into the bottom of hell; in restoring that which he never took away; and in being made temporally a curse for us, that we might attain unto eternal blessedness? Let us look on him, as under the weight of the wrath of God, taking on himself the utmost of evil God had ever threatened to sinners; and let us look on him in his agony and bloody sweat, in his strong cries and supplications, when he was sorrowful unto the death; and doth not he appear to be more than another beloved, and more excellent than all the mountains of prey?

AND it is the glory of EMMANUEL, that he is full of grace to be communicated unto us; for upon him hangs all the glory of his Father's house, and all the vessels of greater and smaller quantity; and he is possessed of that fulness of grace that is in him, for the use and benefit of his people. It is by the grace of Christ that we obtain the pardon of our sins, and are justified in the sight of God; for "he was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" and Christ hath "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and by his grace we are renewed and sanctified, ripened for, and brought into the everlasting enjoyment of God in glory. And as in him all fulness dwells, so out of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace.

4. IT is the glory of EMMANUEL, that he is full of truth; as in the text, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He is full of truth and faithfulness, and we may depend upon his word, for the accomplishment of all that he hath promised; he is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, and his name is faithful and true: and we have in him the truth and substance of all the predictions and promises of the Old Testament, and of all the types and shadows of the law; he is the mercy promised unto the fathers; and he is "the way, the truth, and the life."

5. THE glory of EMMANUEL is great and inefable, if we consider him as King and Head of his church, his free and independent kingdom, the Father having set him as King upon mount Zion, the hill of his holiness, Psal. ii. 6.

It was intimated in the very first promise, that the Messiah was to bear rule; Balaam saw the star of Jacob, with a sceptre for government; and, according to Jacob's prophecy, Judah was to enjoy the sceptre and lawgiver till Shiloh come, to whom the gathering of the people should be. His kingdom was fully revealed to David and the prophets; and our EMMANUEL, upon his birth, is proclaimed Christ the Lord, Luke ii. 11.; and the wise men, who had seen his star in the east, came to the sanhedrim with that question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

OUR EMMANUEL, as the true God and Creator of the world, is King and Lord of the same, by an original underived right, and so he hath the supreme power over it. This is the essential kingdom, common to the three persons of the glorious Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

He has likewise a mediatory kingdom, which he holds of his Father, by the tenor of the covenant of grace; as is declared, Psal. ii. 6. And the highest order of created beings were no more fit to bear this office, than to produce another world out of nothing: for as, in the administration of this kingdom, the immortal souls of men were to be the subjects of this government; so the choicest of Heaven's favours were to be disposed of, and bestowed by him freely.

In subserviency to this mediatory kingdom, the kingdom of Providence throughout the world was also committed to him: hence he rules not only over his willing subjects, but in the midst of his enemies; for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."

IN a special manner he is King and Head of his church, Eph. ii. 20. ; and, as such, he institutes all ordinances, sends out all church-officers, and furnisheth them with all necessary gifts for the work of the ministry.

HE is not only an Head of influences to his church, but also he is a ruling and governing Head, Eph. v. 23. 24. And he hath appointed courts and judicatories for the government of his kingdom, both supreme, inferior, and subordinate, Acts xv. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Rom. xvi. 1. ; which are to meet and proceed in his name, seeing he has promised to be in the midst of them ; and that what they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

HE is the Origin of all church-power and authority ; all church-laws are enacted by him, and are only published and declared by the officers of his house ; and all church-censures are dispensed in his name : and, as King of Zion, and Head of his church, he dispenseth all grace, in the use of the means of his own appointment.

THE church can have no visible head upon the earth. The Pope cannot be it ; for Peter, from whom he pretends to derive his power, never claimed it ; and it is plain that the keys were given to church-officers *in collegio*. Pastors, or the elders that labour in the word and doctrine, being the highest officers in the Christian church mentioned in the scriptures ; and a parity of power and authority, honour and dignity, being lodged in them, it is very manifest that they can have no visible ecclesiastical head. And to make the civil magistrate the head of the church, were to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, by making

its administration wholly carnal and earthly ; whereas the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and not of this world : or it were to make the body of Christ a monster, seeing a spiritual body, with an earthly head, must be such in the nature of the thing.

AND as our Lord Jesus Christ, as Head of his church, has instituted all ordinances, as has been already observed ; so every ordinance that hath not his institution, is superstitious, and impeaches his wisdom and care of the church : of this sort are all the inventions of men in the worship of God, which prevail among those of the English hierarchy ; and such are all the superstitions imposed upon the world by the idolatrous church of Rome ; such as the worshipping the images of Christ and of the saints, their idolatrous mass, and absurd transubstantiation, their delusion of purgatory and indulgences, their bastard sacraments, with their efficacy, from the work itself performed ; with innumerable other corruptions and additions to the institutions of Jesus Christ, condemned by the word of God, and abjured in our Covenants, National and Solemn League. Many of the dregs of those superstitions have not only been retained in the church of England, and have crept in among ourselves, in contradiction to the oath of God, sworn by these three kingdoms in the Solemn League and Covenant ; but these corruptions among us have been nourished and increased, by incorporating with our neighbour-nation, upon terms inconsistent with the covenant-union of the three kingdoms.

AND how much this land is disposed to superstition, doth appear, not only from the practice of many in observing superstitious days, but from the conduct of a great many of late, in going to visit and gaze at

a picture of our blessed Lord and Saviour upon the cross, carried about into the most remarkable places of the kingdom, for no other purpose, it would seem, than to defile the land by this kind of idolatry, and to pave the way for Antichrist's return, to fill that throne of iniquity he formerly possessed among us in the days of darkness and delusion, when this land, with the rest of the world, wondered after the beast. In the second commandment, we are prohibited not only to worship, but so much as to make or to have any likeness or visible representation of the object of our worship. Neither angels nor men, nor all the tribe of created beings, can possibly, with their utmost art, draw any visible representation of him, "who is God manifested in our nature;" nor make the faintest emblem of our great EMMANUEL, who is the blessed and only Potentate, "the King of kings, "and Lord of lords," who only hath immortality, and who dwelleth in that light of infinite perfection and ineffable glory, to which no created being can approach. And seeing it is impossible for men, by any image, to represent the Lord Jesus Christ in his person, it is absurd for them to pretend to represent his human nature apart, seeing it subsists in the person of the Son of God, and nowhere else, and never did, nor shall otherwise subsist; and therefore men, by such an image or picture, do not represent the Lord Jesus Christ, but an idol of their own imagination: and as these who have been affected, or stirred up to devotion (as they have fancied) by such a representation, are guilty of idolatry; so others, who have pretended they were only entertained or diverted by it, are chargeable not only with superstition, but profanity also, in making an idolatrous representation of the great God our Saviour, a fit subject for their diversion and amusement.

AND OUR EMMANUEL, as King and Head of his church, hath not only instituted all the ordinances of his kingdom, for bringing sinners personally into the covenant, and for confirming these that are in it, but he likewise rules and governs his true loyal subjects, the government being on his shoulders; and he gives the laws of his kingdom, not only externally in the word, but he writes them in their hearts. He doth subdue them to himself in the day of his power, and preserveth them to his heavenly kingdom; he refresheth their souls with the manifestations of his favour and love in the way of duty, and he corrects them when they forsake the rule of his word; and he protects and defends them from the attacks and insults of their enemies, and will, in due time, give them the victory, and put them in full possession of the kingdom, prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

THE highest heavens are the magnificent palace and royal residence of this great King: thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him: the church militant and triumphant do adore him, and all the hosts of angels pay homage to him, and bow before him; and seeing he is our Lord, let us worship him, who is the true God and eternal life, the King of Zion, and the Governor among the nations.

6. THE glory of EMMANUEL is great and ineffable, if we consider him, as he is a Priest upon his throne, Zech. vi. 13. "Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH; he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory; he shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne."

He that is our Priest is a divine person, the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens: and he is a Priest in our nature; for he was taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining unto God: he assumed our nature, that the virtue of his Priesthood might be communicated to the sons of men. His Priesthood, in its virtue, looks as far back as Adam, and forward to the last believing soul, and onward to all immortality: he is a Priest by God's appointment, and his own voluntary undertaking, and a Priest ordained to offer sacrifice for sins; and this he did once, when he was once offered to bear the sins of many. And, as our Priest, he has made reconciliation for the sins of his people, and is entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us.

AND it is the glory of EMMANUEL, that he is a Priest upon his throne. His throne is a throne of glory; a throne of essential glory, and of mediatory glory. His throne is a throne of government; for all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto him. His throne is a throne of grace, and all grace is dispensed from it; and "of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." His throne is a throne of judgment, and of the last judgment; for "the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and the dead, small and great, shall stand before his throne." And his "throne is for ever and ever;" and it must and shall stand, when every other throne shall be cast down.

How ineffable is the glory of EMMANUEL; and how great is our consolation from this, that he is, and "shall be a Priest upon his throne?" When we see

him as our Priest upon the throne, we see the human nature exalted above the nature of angels, in the person of the Son of God; and we may expect to obtain mercy at this throne, seeing it was erected for the benefit of sinners, such as we are; and we are encouraged in our approaches to it, because the Mediator sits enthroned upon it in our nature: and when we see him, as our Priest, upon the throne, we may be persuaded that he hath finished the work the Father gave him to do; and that God is well pleased, for the sake of his righteousness, and rests satisfied, that as he hath reconciled us to God by his death, so he doth maintain the peace and friendship, by his intercession within the vail: and it may be comfortable, that all the grace he purchased as a Priest, is dispensed by him from his throne; and we may be assured, that as he came to the throne through blood and suffering, so it is founded in the blood of his oblation, justice and judgment being the foundation of it; and that therefore his throne is firm, and established for ever, and all attempts to dethrone him shall be ineffectual. Attempts of this kind have been made in all ages, and are made at this day; but he that sits in heaven doth laugh at them: and God has pledged his faithfulness, and engaged all his attributes for it, “that he shall sit and rule upon his throne, and shall “be a Priest upon his throne;” and that his “dominion” shall be an “everlasting dominion, which “shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which “shall not be destroyed.”

(7.) THE glory of EMMANUEL is great and inef-
fable, if we consider, that the glory of God is mani-
fested in the face and person of Christ, in the most
conspicuous and illustrious manner, 2 Cor. iv. 6.
“God, who commanded the light to shine out of

“darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the
“light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the
“face of Jesus Christ.” And the Lord’s people do
see rays of glory beaming from the face of God’s a-
nointed: and hence they cry, Psal. lxxxiv. 9. “Be-
“hold, O God, our Shield, look on the face of
“thine anointed.” How ineffable is the glory of
God in our redemption by EMMANUEL! Here all his
perfections beam forth in the most glorious lustre and
splendour! The creation is a mirror, wherein his
power and Godhead is to be seen; but, whereas the
world was made by the word of his mouth, the re-
demption of it is the work of his arm. What a work
of power was the union of our Lord’s two natures in
one person? It was a mysterious work of power, as
well as of wisdom and grace: here the Creator and
the creature nearly allied; heaven and earth united to-
gether; the bush burning, and not consumed; a God-
head dwelling in Christ’s manhood, and yet the hu-
man nature not confounded, but perfected by this
near approach and conjunction of the Deity! How
is God glorified by the supernatural conception of
his human nature without sin, and by making the
death of Christ victorious over all our spiritual ene-
mies, by death overcoming death, and him that had
the power of death, that is the devil; “Spoiling
“principalities and powers, making a shew of them
“openly;” and making the cross the instrument
of his sufferings, the trophy of his victory, and in
gathering all our triumphant palms from that cursed
tree? Here mercy and truth do meet together, righ-
teousness and peace do kiss each other; “truth
“springeth out of the earth,” and “righteousness
“looketh down from heaven.”

(8.) THAT the glory of our EMMANUEL is great

and ineffable, will appear, if we consider, that not only is the glory of God manifested in the face and person of Christ, but that the great EMMANUEL did actively glorify God, and honour him in the most eminent manner: it is through him that God declares he will be glorified, and receive the praises of Israel, *Is. xlix. 3.* "Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." The great end of his coming to the world, was to do his Father's will, *Psal. xl. 7. 8.* And we find an host of angels publishing it, that God had "glory in the highest;" that is, the highest revenue of glory, worship, and praise, from the great EMMANUEL, *Luke ii. 12. 13.;* and the seraphims beholding EMMANUEL upon his throne, (*Is. vi.*) high and lifted up, proclaim that the whole earth is full of his glory; as if the glory God had in the highest heavens, from the obedience of the hosts of angels, were but small, in comparison of the revenue of glory he has received from his Servant "Israel, in whom he is glorified." They do not say the whole heaven is full of his glory, though that is likewise true; but the whole earth is full of his glory; because heaven itself is become a debtor to the earth, in which our EMMANUEL finished the work the Father gave him to do, for an addition to the glory of that place, and a new-born glory that shines through the four wide corners thereof. And angels themselves are debtors to our EMMANUEL, not only for their confirmation, but for revealing more of the glory of God unto them, than ever they knew before, and which they bow down to look into with wonder and praise, *1 Pet. i. 12.*

OUR EMMANUEL magnified the law, and made it honourable; and his whole life, from his birth to

his grave, was one heavenly hymn of praise to God; and every note of it was upon no lower a key than "glory to God in the highest:" for though he was a Son, the Son of the Father, by an eternal, necessary, and an ineffable generation, his fellow and equal; yet he learned "obedience, by the things that he suffered."

(9.) THE glory of EMMANUEL is great, if we consider, that his own glory is eminently manifested in that salvation he wrought for his church and people, Psal. xxi. 5. "His glory is great in thy salvation." The glory of Christ the Mediator is great, in his being the Purchaser of this salvation, Rev. v. 9.; and in that he is the Publisher of this salvation. Some think it was the Son that appeared to Adam after the fall, and preached the first gospel-sermon unto him, Gen. iii. 15. And it is certain that he is the Apostle of our profession, the Prophet raised out of his brethren, and the Messenger of the covenant, that publisheth the glad tidings of great joy to all people. His glory is great, in that he is the Bestower of this salvation; for he is not only the Author and Finisher of our faith, but he saith himself, "My sheep know my voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life," John x. 27. 28. The revelation of his glory is the great means of that salvation, 2 Cor. iv. 6. and iii. 18.; and the full and complete manifestation of his glory will be the consummation of that salvation, 1 John iii. "We know, that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

And as it is the glory of EMMANUEL, that he procures the continuance of that salvation he hath purchased to his followers, (for “the Lamb in the midst of the throne will feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water”) so he receives the homage and acknowledgments due for that salvation he has wrought, both from angels, and the redeemed from among men, Rev. v. 9. 11. 12. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

(10.) THE glory of EMMANUEL is great, if we consider that the glory of our strength is in him, Psal. lxxxix. 17.; and that there is “glory to God in the church, by Christ Jesus,” and no otherwise, Eph. iii. 21. Considered in ourselves, and without a relation to Christ, we cannot think one good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.; and our Lord hath assured us, that “without him we can do nothing.” All our assistances are from him: hence it is said, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;” and it was said by the Lord to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.” And it is through him that our persons and performances are accepted. It was when Jacob had on the garment of his elder brother, that the smell of his garments was as of a field which the Lord had blessed, Heb. x. 9. 10. “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will.—By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering the body of Je-

“sus once for all.” He covers and hides the defects of our worship and services; they ought to be rejected for the sins that cleave to them; but there is a remedy for this in the perfection of his oblation; and they deserve to be rejected, for the unworthiness of our persons who offer them, and for the imperfections that cleave unto them: but this is remedied, by the infinite dignity of his person, and the perfection and efficacy of his intercession. And it is our glorious EMMANUEL who makes not only our prayers, but the whole of our worship acceptable to God, by the perfume of his incense, Rev. viii. 3. 4. “And another angel
“came and stood at the altar, having a golden cens-
“ser; and there was given unto him much incense,
“that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints,
“upon the golden altar, which was before the throne:
“and the smoke of the incense, which came with the
“prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out
“of the angel’s hand.”

THUS we have given a small, weak, and imperfect hint at the glory of “EMMANUEL: lo, these are
“parts of his ways; but how small a portion of him
“is known or heard?”

SECONDLY, II. WE now proceed to apply this doctrine, in an use of *Examination, Consolation, and Exhortation.*

EXAMINATION.

I. HAVE ye beheld the glory of our “EMMANUEL, the glory as of the only begotten of the Fa-
“ther, full of grace and truth?”

I. If ye have seen him in his glory, ye will have an high esteem of him. He was seen of Paul; as of

“ one born out of due time ;” and he did highly esteem him ever after, Phil. iii. 7. 8. “ Yea, doubt-
 “ less I count all things but loss, for the excellency
 “ of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; and
 “ do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,
 “ and be found in him :” and he valued the advance-
 ment of his glory and kingdom more than his own
 life ; “ what mean ye,” saith he, “ to weep and to
 “ break my heart ? for I am ready, not only to be
 “ bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of
 “ Jesus.” The saints esteem the worst of Christ, the
 very cross of Christ, more than the best things of the
 world, Heb. xi. 25. Thus, “ Moses esteemed the
 “ cross of Christ greater riches than all the treasures
 “ in Egypt.” And if we look up to heaven, Christ
 is the matter and burden of the triumphant song of
 the redeemed from among men, Rev. i. 5. “ Unto
 “ him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in
 “ his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests
 “ to God, and his Father ; to him be glory and do-
 “ minion, for ever and ever, Amen.”

2. YE may know if ye have seen Christ Jesus the
 Lord, and beheld his glory, as of the only begotten
 of the Father, by your love to him ; for faith worketh
 by love. Were your hearts made to glow and burn
 within you with love to an unseen Saviour ? 1 Pet. i.
 8. “ Whom having not seen, you love ; in whom,
 “ though now ye see him not, believing ye rejoice,
 “ with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” Is your
 love to him a supreme and superlative love, so that ye
 are made to sing that note with the Psalmist, Psal.
 lxxiii. 25. “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and
 “ there is none upon the earth I desire besides thee.”
 Do ye serve him from a principle of love ? and doth
 the love of Christ constrain you to live to him “ that

“ died for you, and rose again ? True love to Christ doth discover itself in obedience to all his commandments universally ; for our Lord hath told us, if “ we “ love him, we will keep his commandments,” John xiv. 21. And do ye prize fellowship with Christ, so that his presence is to you as life, and his absence as the shadow of death ? Thus his people value a day in his courts more than a thousand elsewhere, and desire to dwell in his house, “ to see his power and glory in “ the sanctuary, to behold the beauty of the Lord, “ and to enquire into his temple :” and they prize retired converse with him, in the secret duties of meditation, prayer, and self-examination, saying with the church, “ Come, my beloved, let us go out to the “ fields, and lodge in the villages, there will I give “ thee my loves.” And you may know your love to him, by the habitual set of your hearts, and the run of your thoughts : thus the church saith of Christ, “ A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me ; he “ shall lie all night betwixt my breasts :” and the Psalmist says, “ My meditation of him shall be sweet.” And though you are disturbed with vain thoughts many a time, yet this is your burden, and they are not your element in which you delight ; but you “ hate “ vain thoughts,” and cry out, “ unite my heart to “ fear thy name :” and you find rest and solace to your souls only in him, and no where else ; saying with the Psalmist, “ Return to thy rest, O my soul,” Psal. cxvi. 7. ; and with the church, “ I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit “ was sweet to my taste.”

3. IF ye have seen EMMANUEL in his glory, ye have been made to admire his beauty, and been excited to holy wonder and praise. The church had a wass of the glory of Christ ; and she cries out in holy

rapture, Song i. 16. "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are of cedar, and our rafters are of fir." Some have been in that case, that they knew not whether to pray or praise, and were made to do both: they are made sometimes to pen love-songs to their beloved; and the notes they sing are notes of wonder: "Who thought upon us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever:" and "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

4. SUCH as have beheld his glory, will be concerned to have others engaged to him. Thus Philip having found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, he invites "Nathanael to come and see," John i. 45. 46. And the woman of Samaria having met with Christ, faith to her neighbours, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did; is not this the Messiah, the Christ of God?" If ye have seen him, and beheld his glory, ye will be concerned to instruct your children and servants in the knowledge of Christ, and will have nothing so much at heart, as that they, and all you converse with, may be acquainted with him.

5. YE would mark the seasons in which ye saw his glory, that ye may know if they were gracious manifestations ye have attained unto. Thus he sometimes gives a very sensible manifestation of himself, and of his glory, at first conversion: he was seen of Paul at his conversion, Acts ix.; "as of one born out of due time." And he frequently manifests himself to the soul, when refusing to be comforted without him: when Mary, John xx. stood at the se-

pulchre, weeping, saying, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou? "Whom seekest thou?" And he "saith unto her, "Mary; and she turned herself, and saith unto him, "Rabboni," which is to say, Master. Or when the poor believer is deeply affected with sin and God's dishonour: Daniel was mourning three full weeks, and gets that comfortable intimation, O Daniel, "a man greatly beloved." Though we do not tie or restrict God's manifestations of himself to these seasons; yet, where God has been pleased to manifest himself in such seasons as these, it is matter of comfort.

6. WE would try what effects the manifestations of the glory of Christ have had upon our souls. These which are gracious, and of a saving kind, they are humbling and self-abasing: thus Job saith, Job xlii. 4. 5. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and in ashes." And Isaiah having seen the glory of Christ, Is. vi. 4. 5. crieth out, "Wo is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And they are of a transforming nature, so that the soul is more holy, heavenly, and spiritual; there is a stamp of heaven upon the soul, and an air of heaven in the conversation, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:" and they darken and eclipse all created glory; so that they count "all things but loss, for the excellency of the

“knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.” Thus good old Simeon, having seen the Lord’s Christ, desired to have his eyes closed by death, Luke ii. 29. “Lord, lettest thou now thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

BUT perhaps some will *object*, that they cannot think that they have looked unto Christ, and obtained saving discoveries of him, because they neither know the time nor the place. To which it may be answered, that there are some who have met with Christ, that know neither time nor place, nor the first discourse that passed betwixt him and them: it is not always for the Christian’s advantage to know the times which he hath kept in his own hand; it is well, if, whereas once thou wast blind, now thou dost see. Ye may know, by the saving effects upon thy soul, if thou hast met with Christ; and particularly from this, if thou art helped to an habitual esteem of Christ, and are kept under something of a divine impression of his excellency, and an habitual sense of thy own sinfulness, unworthiness, and vileness.

Object. (2.) OTHERS perhaps may object, that their bonds are great, and grow stronger. To which it is replied,

[1.] THAT it is ordinary enough to the Christian hereaway to be in bonds: David prays, “Bring my soul out of prison;” and the Lord’s people must expect in this wilderness to endure “a great fight of afflictions, Heb. x. 32. Beware ye lose not your faith in these conflicts, it being far wrong in the Christian, when he is like to lose his feet, to let his grips go.

[2.] WAIT on the Lord, who looseth the prison-

ers, and who has prisoners in his commission, *Is. lxi. 1. 2.*; and who, to his people's comfortable experience, has loosed their bonds, *Psal. cxvi. 16.*

Object. (3.) My sighing comes before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the water. *Ans.* "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright," *Psal. xcvi. 11.* Thy light and joy may both lie under ground for some time, and they may both spring up and appear together. He has said it, they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. And our Lord may be trying the reality of thy faith, whether thou lovest himself more than sense and sight, and all his comforts: then "shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning;" and the clearest blink of manifestation ordinarily follows the darkest cloud.

Object. (4.) I cannot pray, nor order my cause before him; my lips are closed, and I cannot fill my mouth with arguments. *Ans. 1.* There is sometimes a divine silence; a Christian will not get his enlargement expressed, through a sight of Christ in his glory, and will leave off speaking, and begin to wonder: Daniel was not straitened when he saw the angel, and stood trembling; nor John, when he fell at Christ's feet as dead. But this, I fear, is a rare case at this day. *2.* There is a silence and straitening at the duty of prayer, that proceeds from a spirit of bondage; and a sight of Christ in his glory is the best cure for it: "they looked to him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." *3.* Sometimes Christians cannot speak their confession to God; they must roar, *Psal. xxxviii. 8.* "I have roared, by reason of the disquietness of my heart." When the soul has a divine impression of God's greatness and holiness, and

of its own sinfulness, it is no wonder though guilt stare the man in the face, and his heart write uncleanness against himself; and though his tongue be not able to express his thoughts, and utter all the shame, grief, and anguish of his mind, a fresh anointing of the Spirit of God, discovering Christ, as the Propitiation for our sins, is the best method of relief in this case: thus holy Ezra, when he had sat astonished, until the evening-sacrifice, Ezra ix. 4. 5. 6. at the evening-sacrifice, typifying the great gospel-sacrifice, which our Lord Jesus Christ offered once in the end of the world, "he arose from his heaviness," and fell "upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespasses grown up unto the heavens." 4. Perhaps ye have no sense of your wants; and this may be the reason ye cannot express them. Some people their prayers are a constant lying to God. Look to Christ for a heart "sound in his statutes," and that he may make you "to know the plague of your own heart;" and a sense of need will make you cry. 5. Perhaps ye do not depend on the Holy Ghost for assistance in this duty, nor go forth in the strength of Christ, without whom ye can do nothing; and therefore the Lord withdraws that enlargement you formerly had, that you may learn to go about that duty, and all others, in his name, and by faith in him. 6. The wandering of your heart, and impertinent thoughts, which disturb you in the duty of prayer, may proceed from unmortified affections, working toward something forbidden; ye would "therefore take heed there be not in you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; and lest any root of bitterness, spring-

“ing up, do trouble you, and thereby ye be defiled.” The Spirit of God is the Spirit of promise; therefore pray for him, and depend on him for his grace to enable you to mortify sin: for it is “through the Spirit that” we are “to mortify the deeds of the body.” And be deeply humbled before God, that self, and other corruptions, are so strong, and that faith and love to Christ are so weak, as doth appear from the distempers of thy soul, and indisposition to duty and close walking with God; and have recourse to the Lord Jesus, who has taken that name to himself, “I am the Lord thy God that healeth thee;” and he will bind up thy wounds; and “strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”

As to you that are perplexed with doubts and fears as to your state, and cannot think ye had ever a saving discovery of the glory of Christ, try if you can give a satisfying answer to any one of the following questions. 1. Has not a look to Christ, the Propitiation for our sins, and his blood shed for remission of sins unto many, lightened thy heart, and relieved thy soul, fainting under a burden of guiltiness, and quieted thy conscience, when duties, confessions, tears, and enlargements, could give thee no relief? 2. Did you never get a glimpse of his glory on thy knees, that you saw more of him than you ever learned by all the sermons you had heard before that time? 3. Is it not thy desire, and the disposition of thy heart, to “dwell on high,” though thou findest a body of death pressing thee down, and this is thy burden; and thou art groaning in this tabernacle, being burdened, and pleading, and trusting to his word, Psal. xxxiii. 17. “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; he shall dwell on high?” And was you never made to long for the time when you shall be delivered from sin and

self, and all the remains of a body of death, and shall see him as he is? Rev. xxii. 20. Song viii. last. 4. Are not ye "poor in spirit," that see nothing but wants, and unworthiness in thyself, that thou standest in need of all things, and art made to lie down humbly at Christ's feet, and to wait for him, as these that watch for the morning? Then know, that some beam of the Sun of righteousness has shined into thy heart, and thou hast got some twilight-discovery of the glory of Christ; and that "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." 5. Are ye not among these that "desire to fear his name?" Neh. i. 11. "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire "to fear thy name." And is there not a weariness in thy present deserted case, and a breathing for his return to thy soul? There is a want with thee, that all the joy of vintage and harvest cannot make up; and nothing can fill the room of an absent Christ till he come himself: and however low spiritual life is, yet, is there not a breathing after him, and a cry sometimes ascending towards him? Lam. iii. 56. 57. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry; thou drawest near "in the day that I called upon thee, thou saidst, "Fear not." Then, though weeping endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning. Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. And let "Israel wait on the Lord; for with the Lord there is "mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption: "and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

CONSOLATION.

THIS doctrine speaks comfort to all the children of Zion, who have seen the glory of EMMANUEL, and whose hearts have been warmed with love to him; so

that they have been made to follow him, as those whose hearts the Lord has touched. "When he appears, ye shall be like him; for ye shall see him as he is." O that look that Christ shall give to his own children, when time shall be no more, and when they shall be led by the Lamb besides the rivers of living waters!

1. ANY look ye get hereway, is but a mediate look through the vail of duties, ordinances, promises, and dispensations of providence; but that look you will have of him above; that look ye will get of him at death, when ye pass into glory; and, at his second coming, when he "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," will be an immediate look, and nothing shall intervene betwixt Christ and you; but your sun shall arise, and no more go down, and the Lord himself shall be "your everlasting light, and your God your glory." Are you not longing sometimes for that day? 2. ANY look attained to here admits of interruptions; but that look, and sight of him above, shall admit of no interruption: there is no cloud, no night, no desertion there; there is no such complaint in heaven, "Wherefore hidest thou thy face?" There will not be one cloud betwixt his face and you, nor shall one shower fall on your head to eternity. It will be an uninterrupted and an endless look; every opening and look of the eye will be to behold him, and every motion of the feet, will be to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. 3. The look we have here may be abused by the pride of life; but there is no abusing of that spotless look ye shall have above. 4. The look ye have here is but a beholding of his back parts; but there ye shall behold his face: here ye see, as it were, but the skirts of his garments; but

then face to face. 5. Any look ye have here, doth not complete your joy; as long as ye are here, ye are spending your life in bitterness, and your days in grief; but O what joy shall the believer have, when Christ and he shall meet in heaven, and when Christ and he shall meet together in the morning of the resurrection, and in the streets of the new Jerusalem!

6. Any look here doth not perfect our conformity to Christ; believers go to heaven dragging a body of sin and death: but, at the gates of the city above, they shall say, farewell sin and corruptions with all my heart; for we shall never meet again any more. For "we know, that, when he appears, we shall be "like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii.

2. Our look here is of an unknown Christ, a strange Christ; but the look then will be of a known Christ, taken up, and well understood. Faith shall say to love and sight I give my place to you; and love and sight shall be the eternal company of the Christian. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst "any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor "any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst "of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them "unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe "away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 16. 17.

We now proceed to-

EXHORTATION.

SEEING it is the attainment of the disciples and followers of Christ to behold the glory of EMMA-NUEL; then,

I. BE exhorted to come and behold the glory of EMMA-NUEL; behold his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; be-

hold him in the glory he had with the Father before the world began; behold him undertaking for bankrupt sinners, as Surety of the better testament, saying, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, thy law is in my heart!" Behold him in his person, EMMANUEL, God with us; the "Word made flesh, and dwelling among us!" Behold him in his offices, a Prophet greater than Moses, a Priest greater than Aaron, and a King higher than Agag; a Prophet to reveal God to us, a Priest to bring us to God, and a King to keep us with God! Behold him in his love, a love stronger than death, older than the heavens, and more lasting than the everlasting hills! Behold him with the name written on his vesture and on his thigh, that no man knoweth but he himself! Behold him in the form of God, and equal with God, and yet making himself of no reputation, and taking upon him the form of a servant! Behold him in the manger, because there was no room for him in the inn; the Ancient of days, an Infant of days; and yet behold angels singing at his birth, his star appearing in the east, and the wise men falling down before him, and worshipping him, presenting unto him gold, frankincense, and myrrh! Behold him going about doing good, working miracles of mercy, both upon the bodies and souls of men, and yet having no where to lay his head! Behold him in Gethsemane in an agony, and praying more earnestly, and sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground! Behold him with the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saying, "Behold the Man!" Behold him bowing his head, and giving up the ghost! O what a sight, to see that blessed head fall to the one side, to see life lying dead, his speech laid, his corps rolled in linen, and laid in a tomb; his head that is as Carmel, crowned

with thorns ; his countenance, that is as Lebanon, spit upon ; his visage more marred than any man, and his countenance than the sons of men ; his feet that went about doing good, nailed to the cross ; and his eyes that wept over Jerusalem, closed by death !

BEHOLD him with a look of admiration, and of love and affection, Psal. lxxiii. 25. with a look of assent, believing the record God hath given of his Son ; with a needy look, and with a look of expectation and desire ; with “ your souls desiring him in the “ night ; for the expectation of the poor and needy “ shall not be forgotten for ever ;” and with an appropriating and applying look, saying, “ In the Lord “ have I righteousness and strength,” and trusting in him, “ in whom the Gentiles shall trust !”

2. LET lost sinners of Adam’s family be exhorted to come and be espoused to the highest Lord, EMMA-NUEL, the “ Plant of renown,” and the “ Desire of “ all nations,” who is “ more excellent than all the “ mountains of prey ;” by faith to be espoused to this one Husband, even to him that is raised from the dead, “ who is the Brightness of glory, and the express Image of his Father’s person,” and who has “ received a name above every name, that at the name “ of Jesus every knee should bow.”

M O T I V E S.

1. CONSIDER, that it will be much for your gain and advantage to match with lovely Jesus ; for being in Christ makes all things yours, whether life or death, things present, or things to come, 1 Cor. iii. 21. ; though not in possession, yet in a choicer free-

holding, in free heritage, Psal. xxxvii. 11. Rev. xxi. 7. All you possess, you have a right to it by covenant; and all you have, a morsel of green herbs, a bed of straw, want, hunger, or wealth, are gilded, and watered with the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.

2. CONSIDER what Christ did for you. He undertook for you in the covenant of peace, Psal. xl. 7. He took on your nature, and was born in a low condition; for, Is. ix. 6. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace." He obeyed for your rebellion, and died for your sins: he was pursued by justice for your debts, from his birth to his grave: he had not a hole to lay his head in, while he lived, nor a bed to lie in, when he died; and therefore he climbed up upon the cross, and died upon a tree. The four tree of the cross was his dead-bed; here he made his last-will, and left his heart and tender love, mercy and peace, grace and glory, in a testamentary dispensation to such wretched sinners as you are; "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; this cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for remission of sins unto many, drink ye all of it." O for faith in exercise, to go forth to him without the camp, and to see him suffering without the gate; to behold the blessed Jesus, with the tear in his eye, a flood of blood on his mangled body, his face foul with weeping, and his visage more marred than any of the sons of men; and yet with good-will, joy, and delight, suffering for the like of us!

3. CONSIDER what he will do for you. He will

reveal God to you, John i. 18. "No man hath seen
 " God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is
 " in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 He will reconcile you to God by his death, Rom. v.
 1. 10. "Being justified by faith, we have peace
 " with God,—being reconciled unto God through
 " the death of his Son:" and he will bring you to
 God; for "the Just suffered for the unjust, that he
 " might bring us unto God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. He
 will bring you within sight of him that is invisible, to an
 heavenly nearness to God, and communion and fellow-
 ship with him: and he will bring you to "the hea-
 " venly Jerusalem," seeing he hath prepared for you
 a city, where there is a day without a night, a summer
 without a winter, and an eternal spring: holiness is
 the wholesome air of the city; its rivers are all plea-
 sures; its mountains are all spices; and the eternal
 light of it is God himself.

4. CONSIDER what he will give you; he will give
 you rest: for he hath said, "Come to me all ye that
 " are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you
 " rest to your souls; and believing, ye may enter
 " into rest, and sit down under his shadow with great
 " delight." He will give you life; for "he is the
 " resurrection and the life, and such as have the Son
 " have life: and all out of Christ are dead men. He
 will give you liberty under your bondage, even the
 " glorious liberty of the sons of God:" for he "pro-
 " claims liberty to captives, and the opening of
 " the prison-doors to those that are bound:" and he
 will give you light, even "the light of life;" for he
 is "come a light into the world, that he that be-
 " lieveth in him, should not abide in darkness, but
 " have the light of life, And out of his fulness shall
 " ye receive, and grace for grace," till at length ye

"be filled with all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 19.

5. CONSIDER that he excels all other beloveds, and "is fairer than all the children of men." Among shepherds, he is the "chief Shepherd;" among brethren, the "First-born;" among stars, the "bright" and "Morning-star;" among flowers, the "Flower of Jesse, the Rose of Sharon, and Lily of the valleys;" among angels, the "Archangel, and Angel of the Covenant;" among the dead, he is alive again, and the flower and fruit that groweth out of death. He is the first Glory, and Standard-bearer of heaven; and the choicest of heaven and earth. But these are but parts of his ways, and how small a portion of him is known or heard!

WE conclude, with speaking a word to three sorts of persons; and 1. A word to you who are "walking in the light of his countenance all the day long, and have his dew lying all night upon your branches." (1.) Be frequently exercised in self-examination, and trying your interest in Christ, that so you do not deceive yourselves, and take a flash of affection for gracious manifestations. O Professors, were ye ever arrested on your knees, wondering at the beauty and glory of Christ, thinking that ye would fain be with him, wade through Jordan to be with him; and that it would be heaven, in its full glory, to "be with him, and see him as he is?" Was ever that happy time, that Christ did cast the marriage-knot betwixt him and your hearts, that ye were "drawn with cords, all of love;" that your souls were made like the chariots of Ammi-nadib, following hard after him; that ye were taking heaven and earth to witness it, that he had made "with you an everlasting

“covenant,” which is all your salvation, and all your desire; and that the Spirit of God came upon you, as upon Amasai, and those that went with him to David in the hold, influencing you to cry, “There are we, O David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse?” Then may ye say with David, “God hath spoken in his holiness, Gilcad is mine, Manasseh is mine, God is mine, the covenant is mine, Christ is mine, the promises are mine, and life and death are mine.” 2. Be thankful, and “walk humbly with thy God;” for who maketh thee to differ? or what hast thou that thou hast not received? 3. Walk in the light while ye have the light, and improve the present season well; while his candle is shining upon thy head, and his secret is upon thy tabernacle, improve it for increasing thy faith, inflaming thy love, and for strengthening thee to obey his will in all his commands, and to suffer for his interest and cause. Improve it for edification to others, and for instruction to thyself: for more may be learned from one hour’s communion with Christ, than from many years of man’s teaching and instruction. 4. “Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon thee. Let your light shine before men, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Let there be a stamp of heaven on your souls, and an air of heaven in your conversation, that others may take knowledge of you, “that ye have been with Jesus.” If the beauty of holiness be upon you, and a favour of Christ in your words and actions, then shall your “path be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Be sensible of your own weakness; and that “without Christ ye can do nothing,” John xv. 3. 4.; and therefore “go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only.”

2. A WORD to the deserted doubting believer. To you we would say, (1.) There are different degrees of manifestations of the glory of Christ; sunshine, moon-light, and star-light discoveries of him: Christ has different ways of manifesting himself, sometimes in robes of Condescendency, and sometimes in robes of Majesty. Although he has not filled thee with comfort, yet if he has humbled thee, and emptied thee of self, and made thee to breathe after him, he has given thee a twilight discovery of his glory. (2.) Are ye waiting for the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and are you looking for him? Can ye distinguish betwixt absence and presence? and are you affected with distance from him, crying out, "Thou, O Lord, how long?" Is thy heart set upon finding him? and art thou resolved to wait on at his door, looking out for him in every commanded duty? Then thou shalt have reason in due time to say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." (3.) Search out the cause of his hiding; perhaps it was for thy security, Song v. 3.; or for thy giving a squint look to thy idols: "For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth; I hid myself from him, and was wroth." (4.) The Lord hides himself for wise and good ends; such as, to humble the soul, to prepare for greater manifestations, and to enlarge desires after him. O then be concerned to be suitably exercised under his withdrawings, and ye shall find that the vision in due time will speak! and though it tarry, wait for it: and it is but a little time, and "the day will break, and the shadows will for ever flee away."

3. A WORD to these who see no beauty nor comeliness in our Lord Jesus Christ, the great EMMANU-

EL, wherefore he should be desired. To you we would speak, (1.) A word of *conviction*; and may the Lord convince you, by his Spirit, that you are the men who have refused Christ speaking to you from heaven. And, [1.] You who never saw your need of Christ, are actually strangers to Christ: ye who see not a present need of Christ, but say with Felix, "Depart at this time, at a more convenient season I will call for thee;" ye that see not an absolute need of Christ, but only come Agrippa's length, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." [2.] That prefer other things to Christ; that prefer the world to Christ, and say with the Gadarenes, "Depart out of our coasts;" that prefer your lusts to Christ, and refuse to return: for ye have "loved strangers, and after them ye will go." [3.] Ye that were never born from above; for, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" ye that are strangers to a gracious change upon your hearts, by regeneration and effectual calling, ye are such as are "in darkness, the region and shadow of death;" and not one ray of the glory of Christ has shined as yet into your hearts. (2.) A word of *terror* to such; and, [1.] Know that your sin remaineth; not one of your sins are pardoned: "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid." [2.] You are in a lost and perishing condition, 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. For "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." Ye are in darkness, and while in that state, you have nothing to look for but the blackness of darkness for ever: and ye are in a melancholy and dismal state of condemnation; for "he that believeth not is condemned already." And God, with whom ye have to do, is holy and just; he will "by no means clear the guilt-

“ty :” he hath said it, “ The soul that sinneth
“ shall die.” Our God is a “ consuming fire ;” with
him is “ terrible majesty :” and the “ wheels of his
“ throne are like the burning flame.”

WE conclude this discourse, inviting you in the name
of our Lord Jesus Christ, who have never, to this day,
seen the King in his beauty, to “ go forth and behold
“ King Solomon, with the crown upon his head,
“ wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of
“ his espousals, in the day of the gladness of his
“ heart.” Our Lord Jesus saith, “ Behold me, be-
“ hold me,” to you that are not called by his name.
And since your eyes are blinded by unbelief and ig-
norance, that you cannot see him, his word of exhor-
tation speaketh unto you as to Laodicea, Rev. iii.
18. “ I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment,
“ that thou mayest be clothed ;—and eye-salve, that
“ thou mayest see.”

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, the Master of the assem-
blies of Israel, yet calleth for thee ; and “ unto thee
“ is the word of this salvation sent :” and God ha-
ving raised up his Son Jesus Christ from the dead,
hath sent him to bless you, in turning you from
your iniquities. “ The Spirit and the Bride say,
“ Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come.
“ And let him that is athirst, come : and whosoever
“ will, let him take the water of life freely.”

THE DESOLATION of EMMANUEL's land, for the SINS of them that dwell therein.

ISAIAH viii. 7. 8.

Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow, and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O EMMANUEL.

[The second discourse on this subject.]

THE Spirit of God, by Solomon, saith, That "a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." And we are assured, "That by faith, Noah, being "warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved "with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his "house." And, seeing the Lord has been long threatening us in these lands with terrible things in righteousness, it must be a necessary duty incumbent upon us, to prepare for a storm of public calamities, by fleeing "for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set "before us, even the Lord Jesus Christ" himself, who is an "hiding place from the wind, and a covert from "the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land:" and to have the anchor of our hope fixed upon those things "which are within the vail, whither the Forerunner "is for us entered."

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, endeavoured to speak a little of the glory of EMMANUEL, we shall

now consider the second doctrinal observation, namely, "That the Lord, in righteousness, doth sometimes send desolating judgments, a flood of public calamities, upon a nation and people called by his name, the inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land, for the sins and provocations of them that dwell therein."

IN discoursing this subject, we shall, by divine assistance,

I. SPEAK of the church, as it is the land of EMMANUEL.

II. SPEAK of some of the signs of the approach of a flood of desolating judgments upon the inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land.

III. GIVE a hint at some of the sins and provocations of a professing people, which provoke an holy God to let in a flood of judgments upon the land of EMMANUEL.

IV. DISCOURSE a little concerning the flood of judgments that may overflow the land of EMMANUEL.

V. MAKE some practical improvement of this subject.

I. WE proceed, in the first place, to speak of the church of Christ, as it bears the name and character of the land of EMMANUEL. And,

I. THE church, which is EMMANUEL'S land, is like Goshen, "a land of light, and a valley of vision; "when darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people:" and EMMANUEL himself is the light of the land; the Lord God almighty and the Lamb is the light thereof. Hence our EMMANUEL is said to be "the Root and Offspring of David, the "bright and Morning-star; to be the Sun of righteousness, that hath arisen" upon his church "with healing under his wings;" and to have "come a

“light into the world, that these that follow him
 “should not abide in darkness, but have the light of
 “life; and that in his light they might see light.”

And in this light, (1.) They see the King himself in his beauty, and the land that is afar off, Is. xxxiii. 17. (2.) They see their own sinfulness and vileness, John xvi. 7. 8. “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will re-
 “prove the world of sin.” He is the Comforter even in discovering sin; for his convictions prepare the way to comfort: they see sin in the cross of Christ; “they look upon him whom they have pierced, and
 “mourn;” and there is comfort in their sorrows and groans, in their sighs and sobs: and they find a refreshment in looking at the wounds in his hands and side, that they would not give for the joy of vintage and harvest. (3.) In this light they see into, and read the secret of the covenant, Psal. xxv. 14. They see the parties transacting, the blessings promised, pardon, peace with God, adoption, sanctification, and a covenant-relation to God, as their God, in the right of the new-covenant Head, Psal. lxxxix. 26. “He
 “shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God,
 “and the Rock of my salvation.” And John xx. 17. “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and un-
 “to my God and your God.” They see the condition of the covenant fulfilled, and all the blessings thereof bequeathed unto them in a testamentary way, by Christ’s letter-will and testament: for, saith our Lord, “This is the new testament in my blood, shed
 “for the remission of sins unto many. I appoint unto
 “you” (or, in a testamentary way, dispoſe unto you)
 “a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed,” or dispoſed it unto me, in the way of a federal conveyance. And they see their stock laid up in a good and secure

hand, John viii. 35. They see the secret springs of this covenant-transaction, even the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, and the mercy of God, that through him shall be built up for ever: and they see the excellent qualities of this covenant, that it is well ordered in all things and sure; and that it is stable and everlasting: for though the "mountains depart, and the hills be removed, yet this covenant of peace shall not be removed;" for it stands fast with our highest EMMANUEL, God's mercy and faithfulness being for ever with him, who hath fulfilled all righteousness; and God having sworn, by his holiness, that he will not lie unto David. And of this covenant the free-born inhabitants of EMMANUEL's land are made to say, That it is all their salvation, and all their desire. (4.) They see the invisible God, Heb. xi. 25. They see him on a throne of grace, and mercy-seat, and a rain-bow about the throne, like unto an emerald; righteousness and judgment to be the habitation of his throne, and that mercy and truth go before his face: and they see that God is love, 1 John iv. 10. And they read his name, as it is in Christ, to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin."

2. THE voice of the turtle is heard in EMMANUEL's land, Song ii. 12. And the Spirit and the Bride are heard to say, Come, Rev. xxii. 17. The voice of the turtle was first heard in paradise, in the first gospel-promise, and hath been long heard in this poor land, though little among the nations: and they are blessed who have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The gospel is a joyful sound, the sound of a jubilee to bondmen, of liberty to captives, and of the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound. The voice of the turtle is the

voice of the Spirit of God, reproving a world lying in wickedness, and telling them other news and tidings of sin, than what they can know, merely by their own enquiries or rational conviction; and it is his inviting and counselling voice, to come to the marriage of the King's Son, to eat of Wisdom's bread, and to drink of the wine that she hath mingled.

3. THERE is a verdant spring in EMMANUEL'S land, Song ii. 10. 11. 12. 13. "For there the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell."

THE winter-florm is past. Christ, like Jonas, was thrown into the tempestuous sea, and all is calm and serene to his followers; and he is to them, in his merit and death, his righteousness and satisfaction, and his prevalent intercession within the veil, "a covert from the wind, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The dark winter-night is over and gone, and the day spring from on high hath visited us that sat in darkness, in the region and shadow of death: Christ, the bright and Morning-star, hath appeared, and the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon us, with healing under his wings.

THE withering winter-season is past, and the flowers appear on the earth, in a verdant and reviving spring. Our EMMANUEL makes dead withered souls to live, by transplanting them into himself, the noble gospel-soil, in which they are made to flourish to

his praise, and to grow in holiness and conformity unto him.

AND the time of the singing of birds is come. Many poor sinners have changed their sad note, and begin to sing, who were once drooping under fears; and under an affecting sense of the love of God, and of their Redeemer, they are made to sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord, and of his mercy that endureth for ever. "And the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, with their tender grapes, give a good smell;" which sheweth that "now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." The plants of God's vineyard do thrive and flourish in the courts of their God: it is a pleasant season of grace, and we ought to improve the present season, and to hearken to the calls and entreaties of our highest Lord EMMANUEL, who is inviting us to "arise and come away, to come with him from Lebanon, to look from the top of Aman, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, and from the mountains of the leopards."

4. EMMANUEL's land is a land of rivers of water, and that drinketh of the dew of heaven; for there is a "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God," the tabernacles of the most High: the divine Spirit, in his grace, operations, and influences, is that "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, which doth refresh both the upper and lower regions of EMMANUEL's land, the church militant and triumphant. And our EMMANUEL hath promised to be as the dew to Israel, and that he will come

down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth.

5. It is a fruitful land, a land of corn and of vineyards; and in it doth grow "the tree of life, that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits," and the leaves of that tree "are for the healing of the nations." EMMANUEL himself is the food of the land; for, saith he, John vi. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." The Son of God in our nature obeying the law, suffering in our stead, reconciling us to God by his death, finishing the transgression, making an end of sin, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness, is that hidden manna, and the heritage of Jacob, upon which the inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land do feed, and are satisfied as with marrow and fatness: and he maketh them to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, the graces and consolations of the Holy Ghost, that are in them "a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life," John iv. 14. and vii. 37. They feed upon the blessings of the covenant, pardon, peace with God, and fellowship with him; which are to their souls "a feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees, full of marrow, and well refined." And even sometimes they receive of the grapes from Ephraim, and of the first-fruits of the land of promise, joy in the Holy Ghost, assurance of God's love, and of victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave; a prelibation and foretaste of glory, and of the wine that goeth down sweetly, making the lips of them that are asleep to speak: so that they joy in God, through Jesus Christ their Lord, by whom they have received the atonement, and "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

6. EMMANUEL'S land, it is a pleasant and whole-

some land, for the air of it is pure holiness; and this holiness is wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of the inhabitants, in a state of union with Jesus Christ, their sanctifying Head: for "we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that we should walk in them." They are a free society; the Son having made them free, they are free indeed: and they are a company of pardoned, saved, and ransomed ones; and therefore "the inhabitant of that land shall not say I am sick, for the people thereof are forgiven their iniquity.

II. WE come now to speak of some of the signs of the approach of a flood of desolating judgments upon the inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land. And,

1. WHEN the Lord takes away the faithful of the land, that have been standing in the gap, and have been keeping off the stroke, it is a sign that some direful calamity is at the door, Is. lvii. 1. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering, that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. And Psal. xi. 1. Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

2. WHEN the Lord hath been smiting a land with lesser judgments, and they have not been reclaimed by them, Rom. xi. 7. 8. Rev. xvi. 9. and when, instead of being reclaimed, iniquity abounds unpunished among all ranks of persons, Judg. xvii. 6. Psal. lxxviii. 59. 60. When the old world had defiled the earth, by a flood of wickedness and impiety, then God sent a deluge to sweep its inhabitants off the face of the earth. And what ground have we to be

afraid, seeing our trespasses are grown up unto the heavens, that God shall arise among us as in mount Perazim, and wax wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, and turn a fruitful land into barrenness, for the iniquities of them that dwell therein?

3. God's withdrawing his presence from his ordinances, his hiding his face from his own children, and his Spirit ceasing to strive with men, give us reason to fear that some awful stroke is approaching, Gen. vi. 3. 7.

4. WHEN professors fall under security, lukewarmness, and neutrality in the cause of God, and are under sensible decays from that life and liveliness in following the Lord in the way of commanded duties they formerly have attained to, it is a manifest sign that the Lord is about to awaken them, by some rousing and alarming dispensation; when both the wise and foolish virgins slumbered and slept, "at midnight a cry was heard, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," Mat. xxv. And our Lord threatens the church of Ephesus, that, because she had left her first love, he would come unto her quickly, and remove her candlestick out of its place, except she repented; and tells the church of Laodicea, that, because she was neither cold nor hot, "he would spue her out of his mouth," Rev. ii. 4. 5. and iii. 16. 17. And when a church discovers such neutrality in the cause of Christ, that they inflict not due censures upon the broachers and spreaders of error, to the dishonour of God, and the ruin of the souls of men; that they take not the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; it is a sign that the Lord Christ is coming himself, in some remarkable and awful appearance, to take the work in his own hand.

To this purpose he threatened the church of Pergamos, Rev. ii. 14. 15. 16. "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam; so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." Our Lord charged them with having these heretics, because they did so far tolerate them, as not to excommunicate them from their society, and deliver them to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. He therefore denounces a sharp and rousing word of threatening, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly," (that is, in a way or judgment,) "and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

III. But we proceed, in the third place, to give a hint at some of the sins and provocations of a professing people, which provoke an holy God to let in a flood of judgments on the land of EMMANUEL; and these, when duly considered, may be so many sad and melancholy evidences, (if such provocations are found among us), that the day of our visitation is at hand, it being one of the plainest indications of an approaching stroke upon a professing people, when they are guilty of the same sins for which God hath sent desolating judgments on other churches. Thus the Lord directed his backsliding people of old, to consider what he did to Shiloh, for the iniquity of them that dwelt therein. And,

1. THE sin of ignorance, with abounding prevailing formality in the duties of God's worship, is one of these sins that bring desolating judgments upon a professing people, 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11. Is. lxvi. 3. 4. Jer. vi. 8. "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee deso-

"late, a land not inhabited." And barrenness and unfruitfulness under a gospel-dispensation, provoketh God to break down the wall of his vineyard, that it be troden down, to take away the hedge thereof, and to lay it waste, and to command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it, *Is. v. 5. 6.* And how applicable are these things to us in this land? What ignorance of God doth prevail among all ranks of persons? Who hath believed the report of the gospel, or to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Have we not hid our faces from him? "He was despised, and we esteemed him not." And have we not been like Ephraim, an empty vine, bringing forth fruit to ourselves? And may not the Lord complain of us, as he did of his people of old, "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit?"

2. WHEN a professing people are guilty of slighting, wearying, and lothing of the precious things of God, and preferring their own carnal things unto them, the Lord justly contends with them in a most awful manner. The Lord tables a heavy charge against his professing people, *Amos viii. 4.* "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, saying, 'When will the new-moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit.'" And therefore he denounces a heavy wo against them, *vers. 2. 3. 7. 8.* "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? And it shall rise up wholly as a flood, and it shall be cast out, and drowned as by the flood of Egypt. And

"I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and darkness on the earth in the clear day. The end is come upon my people of Israel, I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place, they shall cast them forth with silence."

AND, to apply this to our own case, how are men wearying of, and loathing the precious things of God? How are the ordinances of Christ deserted, and even scoffed at by many? How is the sabbath profaned, by crowds of people walking in the fields on the Lord's day, in some of the most populous places in the kingdom, and by a great many travelling the roads upon that holy day, set apart for the solemn worship of God, and to celebrate the praises of his redeeming love, and of his grace and good-will towards men? And how customary and formal are these in his worship, who enter into his sanctuary? At how little pains are they to prepare their hearts for his worship, or, in a dependence on his Spirit and grace, to keep them with God, when they are in the place of the Holy; or carefully to search and enquire, when the public work is over, how they have profited in the use of the means they have been attending upon?

3. It is a just ground of God's controversy with a professing people, when sin and iniquity becomes universal; for, saith the prophet, Hos. iv. 1. 2. "And the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land

"mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall
 "languish: therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and
 "the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night."
 And when profaneness goes forth from the priests, it
 is an evidence that the calamity is at the very door,
 and that the stroke shall be heavy and dismal. Thus
 it was with Shiloh, when the two sons of Eli, Hoph-
 ni, and Phinehas, were slain, and the ark of God was
 taken. And the Lord threatens ruin and destruction
 on Israel, and to bring evil upon them, even the year
 of their visitation, because both prophet and priest
 were profane, Jer. xxiii. 11. 12. When God saw
 that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,
 he said that he would destroy man from the face of
 the earth, Gen. vi. 5. 7. And if the wickedness of
 the old world brought a deluge upon it, may not we
 expect that a flood of calamities shall overflow the
 land wherein we live, for the Atheism, infidelity,
 lewdness, and profanity, that abounds in all corners
 of it? Perjury and fraud, in our trade and commerce,
 has prevailed every where; drunkenness, riot, and
 revellings, are become universal; all manner of filthi-
 ness and uncleanness doth every where abound; and
 the stage, and night-assemblies, and other such incen-
 tives to vice, luxury, and lewdness, are encouraged
 and frequented; and the name of God is reviled by
 profane oaths, and every thing that is serious is scoff-
 ed at, and treated with an air of ridicule! Shall
 not the land then be desolate, "because of them
 "that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings?
 "Mic. vii. 13. and Jer. v. 7. 8. 9. How shall I par-
 "don thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me,
 "and sworn by them that are no gods. When I
 "had fed them to the full, they then committed a-
 "dultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the
 "harlots houses. They were as fed horses in the



“ morning, every one neighed after his neighbour’s
“ wife. Shall not I visit for these things, saith the
“ Lord? and shall not my soul be avenged on such
“ a nation as this? And Amos vi. 1. 3. 4. 7.
“ Wo to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in
“ the mountain of Samaria.—Ye that put far away
“ the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come
“ near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and eat the lambs
“ out of the flock; that chant to the sound of the
“ viol; that drink wine in bowls: but they are not
“ grieved with the affliction of Joseph. Therefore
“ now shall they go captive with the first that go cap-
“ tive, and the banquet of them that stretched them-
“ selves shall be removed.”

4. UNBELIEF is one of these sins which provokes God to inflict heavy strokes upon a professing people. It was for this that the Lord rejected the Jews, Rom. xi. 20. “ Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith: be not high minded, but fear.” And God hath, in his righteousness, pursued a controversy with this people these seventeen hundred years, for their hainous sin of unbelief, in rejecting the Messiah, the mercy promised to the fathers. Is not this a leading and prevailing evil at this day, an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God? And as the effect of it, are we not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? How few approach to God by faith, as children to a father, conceiving of him as of a father in Christ, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, as of a Mediator betwixt God and man, as of a guide and acquaintance; that see love in his face, and his “ glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?” A promising God is not credited; his words of grace are not believed; and there is no feeding on the word,

and Christ in it as the hidden manna; and hence there is no strength for work and warfare, but weakness and feebleness, and we are become like Reuben, unstable as water, and cannot excel. Affections to Christ are decayed, and he is not honoured and esteemed; he is little in our thoughts, by meditation, or in our lips, by commending him to one another. Though he be the fairest flower of all God's garden of solace and joy, "the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys;" yet to this generation he is a withered flower, that hath neither smell nor beauty! He hath returned to his place, till we acknowledge our offence, and seek his face, and hath been now long away, and hid his face in a cloud; and yet few are lamenting after him, because his absence is not to them as death, nor his presence as life from the dead. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not," *Is. liii. 3.* Has not the Lord Jesus himself been reproached and blasphemed, his Deity attacked, and the divine Spirit, in his grace and operations, reviled? Has not gospel-holiness been decried as Enthusiasm; and a system of mere morality, or rather of immorality and self-love, put in its room? Has not the righteousness of Christ for justification been set aside, and self-righteousness put in its place? And has not thus the religion of Jesus been turned off the field altogether, and the law of nature or heathenism put in its place? And when he was thus dishonoured, we hid, as it were, our faces from him; we were afraid or ashamed to own and confess him, to vindicate his honour, to maintain his truth, and to inflict due censures upon those that had displayed a banner against him; and did not bemoan ourselves, and weep in secret places, for the indignities done him, in the

manner we ought ; else a suitable exercise this way had produced the effect of public and resolute appearances for him, and for his honour and glory. The followers of Christ, if suitably exercised, had rather (as in former times they have done) gone to prisons and scaffolds, and travelled through fire and faggot, than thus to have borne with them that are evil, seen their Lord and Master reproached and blasphemed, and his work overthrown, and his cause betrayed. And whether this generation will take with the guilt of it or not, it is a truth God shall one day write with a sun-shine evidence, that " Christ was despised in Scotland ;" and that we, who were careless lukewarm spectators, " esteemed him not. But " thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his " holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him " whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers ; " kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, " because of the Lord that is faithful, and the holy " ly One of Israel, and he shall choose thee," Is. xlix. 7.

5. Our dealing treacherously with God in the matter of his covenant, is one of these sins for which God threateneth and inflicteth dreadful desolation upon a professing people, Lev. xxvi. 25. " And I " will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the " quarrel of my covenant : and when ye are gathered " together in your cities, I will send the pestilence " among you, and ye shall be delivered into the hand " of the enemy." Are not we these who have been unstedfast, and have dealt treacherously in the covenant of God ? Are we not guilty of walking unsuitably to the engagements we came under by our baptismal covenant, and by personal covenants, which we have professed to seal at the table of the Lord ?

Personal covenanting is nothing else but a person's taking hold of the covenant of grace, the covenant made with Christ, the second Adam; taking hold of the promises of it, the Mediator of it, and of his righteousness, as the alone ground of justification, pardon, and acceptance with God: and every soul united to Christ by justifying faith, that centereth upon his Priesthood and righteousness, doth, by faith of the operation of God, take hold of his strength for sanctification, and doth, in his strength, subject itself to the government of Zion's King, and to the whole royal law, as a rule of life; devoting its all to him, and resolving against every sin, and to do every duty through his grace and aid. Such a transaction as this, is both warrantable and commanded; and if any have gone to work in a legal way, and made covenants, and then trusted to them, and put them in Christ's room, this abuse of theirs does not disprove the lawfulness and duty of personal covenanting, when managed according to the rules laid down in the word: and as a covenant of duties, or an engaging in the strength of Christ to do his will, is a branch of personal covenanting, consequential unto, but inseparable from the justifying and uniting act of faith, which terminates upon his Priesthood; it must be found with every believing soul, either implicitly, or more formally expressed. And this, when duly considered, may satisfy those who enquire, what warrant we have under the New Testament for national covenanting? To which it may be answered, That the whole Bible doth warrant this practice. Not only the Old Testament, in which are so many precedents of a nation's avouching the Lord to be their God, and so many promises and predictions of the like exercise in New-Testament times; but the whole strain of the New Testament must be confessed to be,

to bring nations, where the gospel is published, to Christ, as well as particular persons. Is it not as much the duty of the nation of Scotland to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to submit to him as King of Zion, as it is the duty of any particular person in the nation? Did not the Macedonians give themselves to the Lord? and were they not in their duty in so doing? And might not all Greece, and the Roman empire itself, have warrantably done the same? And if they had given themselves to the Lord, to be saved by his merit, and sanctified by his Spirit, disposed of by his providence, and ruled by his laws; had they not, by subjecting themselves to all the laws of Zion's King, in the plainest terms submitted to these particulars following, as included in the general clause? namely, That they would, through grace, walk closely with God; that they would maintain his truths and worship in purity, and the discipline and government of his house, in the form appointed in his word; and that they would prefer Zion, and the glory and honour of their Redeemer, to their chiefest joy. And is there more or less than this sworn to in our National Covenant, and Solemn League? And if the danger of hypocrisy, and other failings in the management of the duty of National Covenanting, can be a sufficient argument against it, it must at the time be an argument against every duty prescribed to us by God in his word. We have no reason to doubt that there were unsound members in the church of Macedonia, of whom the apostle saith, "That they gave themselves to the Lord:" and that an oath, the matter of which is lawful, doth bind the conscience, is manifest from the punishment inflicted for violating the oath to the Gibeonites; though both the treachery of the Gibeonites, the imposers of it, and the

washness of the Israelites in taking it, without first consulting with God, are circumstances that cannot be vindicated.

THIS much I was obliged to say in a passing hint, because not only have we dealt treacherously with God, in violating our Covenants, National and Solemn League, sworn with the greatest solemnity to the most high God; but too many are come the length to deny their obligation, and to ridicule these sacred ties these lands are under, to promote the work of reformation.

NOTHING is more certain, than that cleaving to God, and close walking with him, zeal for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, for his truths, and purity of his worship, and for the government of his house, our endeavouring personal, and family as well as public, reformation, and our promoting the honour of God, according to our several stations and capacities, are duties incumbent upon us by the scriptures of truth, and the authority of the God of heaven; and all ranks among us in Scotland, who are, by the solemn oath of God, sworn to be active in these duties, having grossly transgressed in every one of these particulars, as our trespasses are grown up to the heavens; so we have reason to fear, that, because of the oath of the covenant, these lands of Scotland, England, and Ireland, shall mourn; and that the Lord shall pursue the quarrel thereof, until he bring darkness and desolation upon us, Ezek. xvii. 15. to 19. " Shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? — Thus saith the Lord God, As I live, " surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my " covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head, Dan. ix. 4.—8.

“ And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made
“ my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and
“ dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to
“ them that love him, and to them that keep his
“ commandments. O Lord, to us belongeth con-
“ fusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to
“ our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.
“ And Dent. xxix. 24. 25. with Jer. xxii. 8. 9. E-
“ ven all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord
“ done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat
“ of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because
“ they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God
“ of their fathers, which he made with them, when
“ he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.”

6. FORSAKING of first love, is another of these sins that provoke God to send desolating judgments upon a professing people: for this the Lord threatened to remove the candlestick of the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 4.; which may occasion thoughts of heart unto us, because we have in a very great measure declined from our former attainments. We shall, on this head, speak little anent the public defections of these times (some account of them having been published in an Act and Testimony lately, to which I adhere). But let every one of us look into our own breasts, and search and try our own ways, and observe the behaviour of the present age and generation; and then, under the influence of the divine Spirit, we may be made to cry out, “ We with our
“ fathers have sinned, we have done wickedly; we are
“ men of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of
“ unclean lips; how is the gold become dim, and the
“ most fine gold changed!” Is not our light darkened and eclipsed? our life withered? and our strength abated and decayed? Tenderness is gone, influences

are withdrawn, and prayer is restrained and shut out. Faith faileth, love is grown cold, and our hearts are hardened as stones; so that there is little or no sanctuary-vision of the glory of EMMANUEL, little or no delight in God, or in his word, or in the fellowship of his people: corruptions are aloft, and heart-plagues do abound: the Lord hath left the tents of Shiloh, the tents he placed among men: ordinances are deserted; and conversion-work, and the success of the gospel, is almost quite at a stand: God hideth his face, and is as a stranger unto his people, and seems to be gone to his place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek him early; and how little exercise of spirit, for his withdrawals, is to be found, even among those who have some remembrance of a better condition? And any breathings of desire after him that are with some, how faint and languishing are they? And how many are in a manner content to live without God, and to suffer him to be gone, without taking hold on the skirts of his garments? It may justly be said, That we do fade as a leaf, and that our iniquities, like the wind, do take us away; and that there be few that call upon his name, or stir themselves to take hold on him: for he hath hid his face from us, and doth consume us, because of our iniquities.

OUR want of tenderness, and godly fear in our way and conversation, doth show that the holy flesh is departed from us, and that we are more hardened than we were formerly; departing from God, and want of fear, are joined together, Jer. ii. 19. Things, which before seemed as camels, are swallowed down as gnats; but the more life, the more sensible; and the more love, the greater caution and fear to offend: but how are life, fear, and tenderness gone? Or else, what

means our carnal discourse on the Lord's day? Was not this challenged of old by the Spirit of God? II. lviii. 13. And whence so few thoughts of God, and so many carnal frothy words every day? Ah! there is little of the Lord in the heart, else there would be some smell and savour of him in words and actions. The time was, when the mouths of professors were a well of life, and their tongues as choice silver; but how little shall be heard now all the day to the praise of Christ, or to the edification of one another? The heart is not carefully kept in a Christian frame, in a praying frame, in the sense of wants, and in a praising frame, in a sense of mercies; and its thoughts and motions are not looked to, nor duly watched over. And how little are consciences smitten with convictions for sin? how soon win they to peace? and how slight are they in works of repentance? And is not this a plain evidence of a great estrangement from the lively actings of faith, in "looking to him whom we have pierced, and mourning for him as for an only son?"

7. CARNAL security is one of these sins that provoke God to send in a flood of judgments upon a professing people. When the servants begin to say, "My Lord delayeth his coming," he will come to reckon with them in an hour they are not looking for him: and how secure were the old world, when the deluge overflowed them? And are not we fast asleep, and our spiritual senses bound up at this day? Is not the taste, relish, and savour of spiritual things gone? And as to the manifestations of the glory of God in his word and works, in duties and ordinances, is not the vision, in all these, become like that of a book which is sealed? What sloth doth there prevail in spiritual duties? Are not some duties slighted alto-

gether; such as secret fasting, watching over our hearts and ways, self-examination, and daily meditation? Christians have sometimes risen in the night, and poured out their hearts before him; his song has been with them in the night, they have communed with their own hearts, remembered him on their bed, and meditated upon him in the night-watches; but how are we become like a degenerate vine, and, like Ephraim, an empty vine that bringeth forth fruit to himself! A selfish, sensual, carnal, worldly spirit prevails. Love to Christ and his saints hath decayed, and an eager love to the world has filled its room! And we do not prepare for duties, but rush upon them in a customary and formal way. No preparation for prayer by meditation, and looking into our state, and present ease and frame; and no preparation for public ordinances, by a lively exercise of faith, and other graces, in all secret and private duties. And the heart is not at work in duties and ordinances, only we consume and make a waste of so much time; and formality makes the whole of our performances unfavoury. And though we be thus far wrong, both as to the single end in duties, and the right manner of going about them in the strength of Christ, and with an eye to him alone for acceptance; yet what a legal and woful disposition discovers itself in resting in the means, and taking peace and quiet from the duty performed? And do not most part shew and discover it, that they look not after their duties, and that they do not endeavour, in the use of all means appointed of God, to be really such as they profess to pray to be made? And have not many lost all sense of sin, and laid aside all fear, reverence, and regard unto God?

For these things we have ground to weep, and our

eyes to run down with water, seeing they are threatening signs, "That the flock of the Lord shall be "carried away captive." Oh! that these that make mention of the Lord were enabled to bestir themselves, (but alas! the lamp of prayer is going out in the churches of Christ), and that they were excited to give him no rest, till he established Zion, and made her a praise in all the earth; and till the Spirit were poured out from on high, and the wilderness made a fruitful field, and the desert made to blossom as the rose!

IV. WE now come to discourse a little of the flood of judgments that may, and sometimes doth overflow the land of EMMANUEL. As to which we may remark,

I. THAT a flood of common calamities doth frequently overflow the land of EMMANUEL, for the iniquities of them that dwell therein, Jer. vii. 12. "But "go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, "where I set my name at the first, and see what I "did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel." And the Lord, in righteousness, maketh the sword, famine, and pestilence, to plead his quarrel and controversy with a sinful people, who have sinned against light, and many means to reclaim them from their backslidings, Lev. xxvi. 25. 26. "And I will bring "a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of "my covenant: and when ye are gathered together "within your cities, I will send the pestilence among "you, and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the "enemy. And when I have broken the staff of your "bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by "weight, and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied."

2. THE stroke is commonly attended with a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. Thus doth the Lord threaten his ancient people, Amos viii. 2. 3. 11. 12. "Then said the Lord unto me, the end is come upon my people of Israel, I will not again pass by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place, they shall cast them forth with silence. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." And in the same manner doth the Lord threaten the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 5. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

3. A PUBLIC and common calamity of this kind is ordinarily attended with a flood of persecution, Dan. viii. 9.—12. "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." This is to be understood of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a most cruel and bloody persecutor of the church and people of God; as is expressed in the following verses: "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host, and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the

"place of his sanctuary was cast down." The sins and provocations of that people, were the procuring cause of that desolation that came upon them: for, as it follows, "An host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression; and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered." This cruel tyrant put Eleazar and the seven brethren to death, by cruel tortures, because they would not act contrary to the rules God had given them; he defiled the temple, made it a place of worship for idols, and burnt the law of God, and persecuted the saints of the most high in a most barbarous manner: but it was God himself that put the sword into his hand, to plead his own controversy with a sinful people: for "the host was given unto him, because of transgression;" and hence "he practised and prospered."

AND may we not observe evident signs of the approach of such calamities among us in this land? What days may we not expect to see, when the pleasant clustres, the societies of the saints, have been gathered away by death? Godly and useful men are removed with more than ordinary haste, Is. lvii. 1. as the husbandman hurries his corn with haste into his barn, when he sees the storm a-coming; and the general decay of religion, and the power of godliness among them that are left, forebodes destruction at the doors, Hos. iv. 18. "Their drink is sour:" a lively metaphor, expressing the deadness and formality of the people in their worship of God; it was like sour or dead drink, which had lost its spirits, and was flat; such were their duties. No spiritual life, affection, or favour in them; they heard as if they heard not, and prayed as if they prayed not.

THESE lands belong to Christ, by a deed of gift from the Father, Psal. ii. 8. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;" and by resignation of themselves to him in our Covenants, National and Solemn League: but we forgot his mighty works, believed not in God, nor trusted in his salvation, but have departed from the Lord by a gradual backsliding, till our defection is come to a most lamentable height!

A FLOOD of oppression has overflowed the land, hirelings are intruded upon the heritage of the Lord, and the cries of the oppressed are ascending up to heaven. Christ has been dethroned, and the idol of self set up in his room: and the authority of Christ has been attacked, and the authority of men set up above it; and that by public deeds both of church and state.

AND not only have the bulk of the ministry been silent, and have given no suitable testimony against the late act of parliament, invading Christ's Headship; but the greater part of them, by reading the said act upon the Lord's day, in the time of divine worship, have plainly owned another than Christ for the Head of the church, and have taken their holding from the civil powers, to the dishonour of God, the profanation of the Lord's day, and the offending, wounding, and scattering of the flock of Christ.

WE look like a people ripened for judgment, if we consider that Christ and his gospel is despised, that sin is become universal, and the wickedness of man is great in the earth. The Spirit of God is reproached, and the Son of God is blasphemed; lesser

judgments have not reclaimed us, and warnings, by God's word and providence, have been contemned, and a deep security has seized all ranks of persons. And many sinful compliances have been made with the sinful courses both of present and former times, Hof. v. 11. 12. 14. "Ephraim is oppressed, and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. For I will be to Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him."

AND we have good ground to apprehend the approach of tearing, and lion-like judgments, that "will spare none;" that the wise man shall not be delivered by his wisdom, the strong man by his strength, nor the rich man by his riches, nor the time-serving man by his sneaking compliances; such judgments as shall be sudden and surprising, so awful and terrible, that mens hearts shall fail them; inevitable, that there shall be no way to escape them, or flee from them: and by which these lands in many places shall be "laid desolate," and being "desolate, shall mourn."

MEN have taken their time of sinning, and God will take his time of punishing; he will vindicate his own holiness, and maintain his authority and government of the world. Men have pled for a toleration of error and blasphemy, from this topic, that "God can right himself: and so he will," to the terror of Britain and Ireland; and will punish these sins that magistrates would not punish, and ministers would

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not censure. "And because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God."

BUT it is to be hoped that Christ will maintain his claim to the isles of the sea, and that a "remnant shall escape, and be as doves in the valleys, mourning every one for his iniquity."

V. We now proceed to apply this doctrine, in an use of *Examination, Consolation, and Exhortation.*

EXAMINATION.

1. ARE ye the true inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land? they are of an heavenly original. Have "ye been born from above? if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Is your conversation in heaven, and do ye speak the language of Canaan? Are ye clothed with holiness and humility, which is the garb of the inhabitants of EMMANUEL'S land? The true inhabitants of that land have high and noble aims, the glory and honour of God: they are acted from a principle of love to God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; they see him that is invisible, and look at these things which are not seen, and are eternal. 2. Ye have seen an infinite worth and excellency in EMMANUEL; that he is the "Plant of Re-nown, and more excellent than all the mountains of prey."—Ye have been convinced of your blindness, unbelief, and natural enmity, and of the need of a day of his power to overcome the opposition to him that is in thy heart: but now, that he hath drawn thee with loving-kindness, thou art made to sing, "I bless the Lord that gave me counsel;" and "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in the earth that I desire besides thee." 3.

How stand ye affected to the Lord of EMMANUEL's land? Simon, son of Jonas, "lovest thou me?" Do ye love him and keep his commandments, and study, in the strength of his grace, to do always those things that please him? Ye rejoice to see him honoured, and the crown to flourish upon his head, and cannot but be affected with the indignities that are done him in the day wherein ye live. "I beheld transgressors," "and was grieved, because they kept not thy law." To see him in a duty, or an ordinance, is the great comfort of thy life; but when he hideth his face, thou art troubled. And are ye not made sometimes to long for the immediate vision of him, to see him face to face, and to long for his appearance and second coming; and to say with the church, Rev. xxii. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus? And do ye believe in the Son of God?" These that believe in him, "rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh;" rejoice in what he is in his person, EMMANUEL, "God with us;" in what he has done, "in finishing transgression, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness:" and they have a superlative esteem of Christ, "counting all things loss, to win him, and be found in him; not having their own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

CONSOLATION.

Be encouraged, ye that follow our EMMANUEL, and continue with him in his tentation; for "he appointeth to you a kingdom." Be not discouraged in the prospect of calamities; for all creatures are in the hand of your Father, whose kingdom ruleth over all: if he has any further service for thee, he will preserve thee, though it should be in dens and caves of the earth, Psal. xci. And though thou

shouldst fall in the common calamity, thy "latter end shall be peace." Thy joy no man taketh from thee; thy best things are well secured, and are beyond the reach of the world: if he designs to carry thee through the flood, to serve him yet in the lower house, he "will be with thee when thou passest through the waters, and will refine thee in the furnace, as silver is refined, Zech. xiii. Close."

AND it affords matter of consolation, that all that relates to Zion is managed by the Lord himself; and if he sees meet that there should be a day of treading down, and of perplexity from the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, who may say unto him, What dost thou? he giveth to us no account of his matters. And as to Zion, her "King is in her," however low she be brought; "and he will help her, and that right early." He will bring glory to his own name, and good to his church out of these dispensations; affliction being the time when humility, faith, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness do most flourish among his followers and disciples. And however low his interest be, yet it shall rise again: he has built his church "upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

EXHORTATION I.

1. PREPARE for a day of calamity, and for suffering and shaking times. The Lord seeth meet that his people meet with shaking trials hereway, to put a difference betwixt earth and heaven; to humble them, and discover the ills of their own hearts; to wean them from this world; to try their graces; and to make them value the choice they have made, through grace, of God, for their portion, and of Christ, for their refuge, Is. xxxii. 2. You may meet

with shaking providences, and with shaking persecution, for the cause of Christ, John xvi. 2. "The time cometh, whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service. But this they will do, because they have not known the Father nor me." And with Paul, you may come to a place where many seas meet. Your inward trials may be attended with desertion, and the hidings of God's face, and with a conflict with temptation, and the power of indwelling sin; though it is the Lord's ordinary way "to stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind," and to give a liberal allowance for the cross of Christ; yet he hath not limited himself; and you are not to think strange of the fiery trial, if ye find, that without are fightings, and within are fears: but though "he cause grief, he will have compassion," and in his own time "compass you about with songs of deliverance: for many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

AND these shocking dispensations may come to such an height, that professors may catch severe falls, such as communion-attainments will not be able to keep them from breaking to pieces, nor former resolutions save or preserve them: thus it was with Peter after the first communion, and the strongest resolutions. And these dispensations may be so dark, that ye may be bewildered in the way of duty, and lose your road, as the young prophet did, by hearkening to the old, which did cost him his life. And these trials may be so shocking, that they will discover the hypocrisy of many, and will discover corruptions, and the strength of them, which ye thought were not in you, or were mortified long before now; and such as may darken all your evidences, and try

all your graces, your faith, love, patience, and obedience to purpose.

WE shall now offer a few directions how to be prepared, through grace, for a day of calamity, and times of suffering.

1. IT is to be the concern of professors to have a principle of grace in their hearts, their hearts sound in God's statutes, Psal. cxix. 80. The soundness of the heart is tried in a storm of trouble or suffering; and when the heart is not right, there is much unsteadfastness and fainting at the approach of the trial, Psal. lxxviii. 37. This new nature has an heavenly tendency to God, through Christ Jesus; it aims at nothing but to be with God, to honour him, to obey him, and to please him in a way of duty: it goes out in the strength of grace, and depends on Christ alone for acceptance; and it makes the soul break through all reproaches, persecutions, and afflictions, to be at him, and to please him. As water has a tendency to run into the sea, though mountains lie in its way, which it cannot remove, it will creep about some other way; so where there is a principle of grace in the heart, it closeth with the command of God in his word; and in a dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, it cleaveth to God, in a way of duty, in the most trying times, and breaketh through all opposition that stands in its way.

2. SOME comfortable evidence of our interest in Christ, is a good preparative for a time of calamity and suffering, 2 Tim. i. 12. "For the which cause
"I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed; and
"that he is able to keep that which I have commit-

"ted to him against that day." And the faith of God's love to our souls, and the exercise of love to him, Rom. v. 3. 4. will encourage and strengthen us in suffering for Christ, and make us very joyful in all our tribulation.

3. FAITH is of excellent use, it being a good preparative for suffering, and a noble support under it, "to live by faith upon the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. It looks to God, and is lightened, Psal. xxxiv. 5.; and it rests upon God, when outward helps do fail, Is. xxvi. 3.; and thus the soul is established, Psal. cxxv. 1. When driven off by discouragement and temptation, it puts forth a resolute act of adherence, Job xiii. 15. "Though he should slay me, I will trust in him." And do troubles continue, and prayers are offered up, but God is silent, and no relief comes? then faith waiteth, Is. xlix. 23.; and faith fills the soul with a pleasant calm and serenity, Rom. v. 1. and delivers from fear: unbelief and fear go together; "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? It commits the business to Christ, and leaves the matter with him, and is thus delivered from anxiety and perturbation, Psal. xxxvii. 5. It relies on Christ's word of promise, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace. It sees him that is invisible, as Moses (Heb. xi. 25.) "endured, as seeing him that is invisible; and choosed "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, "than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than "all the treasures of Egypt." And it realizeth his presence with them in all their sufferings and calamities; for he has said, "When thou passest through "the waters, I will be with thee:—Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God;

"I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness." And faith doth support, from the consideration that their sufferings are for Christ's sake; ("For thy sake," saith the Psalmist, "we are killed all the day long;") and by comparing their sufferings for Christ, with his sufferings for them; and by considering that they themselves had suffered the wrath of God to eternity, had not Christ interposed for them. And faith supports the soul, by foreseeing the end and final removal of all their calamities, 2 Cor. iv. 17. "That their light afflictions, which are but for a moment, do work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while they look not at the things which are seen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal."

4. A heart dead to the world, and all the pleasures and enjoyments of it, is a good preparative for a public calamity, and times of suffering.—Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." We are to run the race set before us, in the most difficult steps of it, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; considering him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied, and faint in our minds." This will make us to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, knowing that we have in heaven a more enduring substance; to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, and to be mortified to our ease and repose, to our name and character in the world, to our freedom and liberty, and even to life itself, "not loving our lives unto the death,"

Rev. xii. 11. But unmortified corruptions will rage in a day of trial, and, like a torrent, sweep away all our resolutions; so that we will not suffer as Christians, to the honour and glory of Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. CHRISTIAN courage and resolution is of excellent use in suffering and trying times. The apostle Paul was eminent in this grace; for, saith he, Acts xx. 24. "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." This is not a natural, but an holy boldness for the cause of Christ, Jer. ix. 3. "Valiant for the truth." By this grace the Christian is animated to perform difficult duties, to maintain and appear for the cause of Christ, when it is opposed, and sinful compliances are required, Dan. iii. 16. and vi. 10. Thus Moses kept up an high value for Christ, and was not deterred from his duty by the fear of men; for "he feared not the wrath of the king," Heb. xi. 27. This fortitude of mind is an holy boldness in performing difficult duties, flowing from faith in the call of God, and from a dependence on Christ, and his promised grace, to enable to the performance of them: it gives peace in the mind, whereas fainting will disquiet sadly, Psal. cxii. 7. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." It strengthens others, whereas fainting *discourages*; like the fainting of a standard-bearer in an army, and like the spies that brought up an ill report on the land of promise.

6. A PRAYING frame is suitable for times of

trouble and suffering, "Is any afflicted? let him pray." We are to "pray with all prayer and supplication in the spirit," Eph. vi. 16. And because "we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, we are to hold fast our profession" in shaking times, and to "come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need," Heb. iv. 14.

JACOB, in the time of his trouble, he wept, and made supplication, and he had power with God, and prevailed, Hof. xii. 4. And in our supplications we are to depend upon the assistance and influence of the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, with groanings that cannot be uttered; and upon the merit, mediation, and powerful intercession of the Son of God, appearing in our nature within the vail, whom the Father heareth always.

7. AN habitual and constant dependence upon our Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary, in order to our glorifying God in the fires; for "without him ye can do nothing, and through Christ strengthening us, we shall" be enabled to "do all things." We depend on him for every thing, as the branches depend on the root, and the building upon the foundation, John xv. 5. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. God has laid up all our stock in Christ's hand, and will have him glorified by his people and followers, in their depending upon him, and receiving "out of his fulness, and grace for grace:" and it is their disposition to glory in nothing but their infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon them. Their na-

tural aversion to a way of dependence upon him for all things, is conquered by grace; and they glory only in the Lord, because "the glory of their strength" is in him, and in his righteousness are they exalted."

EXHORTATION II.

LET all that hear this everlasting gospel, be exhorted to assemble to the standard of Zion's King, the Lord of EMMANUEL's land; for he is the glorious Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people shall be, Gen. xlix. 10. And this being a dark and cloudy day, because a sinning and backsliding day, and a day of God's departure from the land, and of his controversy with it; a day of his scattering and dividing us, of his making the earth to tremble, and making us to drink the wine of astonishment, and of threatening us with terrible things in righteousness, and to punish us seven times more for our iniquities; it is a season wherein we are particularly and loudly called upon, without delay, to assemble under his banner, Zeph. ii. 1. 2. "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired: before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you."

AND this standard, to which we are called to gather ourselves, is a banner of truth, Psal. lxiv. 7.; and to it we are to assemble ourselves, by believing in him, "who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" by depending on him, and living by faith upon him, who "is full of grace and truth;" and thus receiving out "of his fulness, and grace for grace;" and by cleaving to his cause and interest, and in our

different capacities "contending for the truth once delivered to the saints." I might here mention all the branches of the testimony to his truth and cause, opposed at this day, which some, in a course of providence, have been led out to give and lift up: but it would draw out this discourse to too great a length to enter further at this time upon these particulars.

THE standard of Zion's King, as hath been observed, is a banner of truth; and the whole of divine revelation, and the whole counsel and purposes of God, and all the declarations of his mind and will, are inscribed and written on this his banner of truth: and every truth, however small it may appear in the view of some, is well worth the contending for; it being, as well as all others, inscribed on the banner of Zion's King, and a ray from him that is the Fountain of all truth, the "blessed and only Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, and whom no man hath seen, nor can see." And the banner of Zion's King is a "banner of love," Song ii. 4. It was love that made our EMMANUEL take the field, and give the shout of war against his own and our enemies, saying, "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come:" and it will be heaven itself, to read the motto that is inscribed on this his banner, that is, to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. And his banner is likewise a "banner of power;" and there is protection under it for all the followers of our EMMANUEL: for he himself doth support it, and bear it up, who bears up the pillars of heaven and earth; who is the mighty

God, and the everlasting Father, and the Standard-bearer among ten thousand. And there is rest and repose under this banner, in the midst of all the shakings and tossings here below, Is. xi. 10. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." And saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 3. "For we who have believed do enter into rest." For our highest Lord EMMANUEL shall be, to all those that assemble under his banner, a place of broad rivers and streams, "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

To conclude this discourse, let us, with the four and twenty elders, fall down before the throne of Zion's King, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and join issue with the redeemed from amongst men, in saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood:" and let us put in our note with the angels round about the throne, who are saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Amen.

CHRIST'S CALL to the rising generation *.

Considered and applied in
THREE SERMONS.

MARK X. 14.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God.

[The first discourse on this subject.]

WE have here the welcome which Christ gave to some little children that were brought unto him. In the preceding verse, it is said, " They brought young children to him, that he should touch them ; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them." We may suppose they were

To the following discourse was prefixed the succeeding address, " To the young people of my own congregation."

" Having been directed, in the course of my ministry, to preach the gospel of Christ to you, from the texts prefixed to the following sermons ; I have taken this method, to lay the truths then delivered before you, and others who may read these discourses, that you may deliberately consider the things which belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes. And, in transcribing my notes, I have not closely adhered to the periods of the sermons, as they were delivered in your hearing ; but have put the substance of the discourses in such a form and method, as I thought most proper for edification, in reading the sermons thus published : and, in transcribing, I have enlarged upon several heads, and added others."

their parents that brought them: others brought their children to Christ, to be healed when they were sick; but these children were under no present malady, only they desired a blessing for them. They brought them to him, that he might touch them; it is elsewhere said, that he might lay his hands upon them; that is, that he might bestow a blessing upon them. Thus Jacob put his hands upon the sons of Joseph, when he blessed them. The disciples discouraged those that brought them; they thought it would bring a great trouble to their Master, and therefore rebuked them.

“ In these discourses, I have not entered upon the controversies of the times, nor considered your duty to bear testimony to the truths of Christ, to his kingly office, and all the other branches of his covenanted cause and interest in this land; which is a subject most useful and necessary to be handled in its own proper place: but considering that it is needful you have some saving acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith of the operation of God, in order to your being faithful witnesses for Christ, and holding fast the word of his promise, I have therefore endeavoured, through the Lord's assistance, to lay the following plain and important truths before you, from the word of God: and may the Holy Spirit breathe upon them, by his own divine influence, that, through his grace, you may be brought to believe on the Son of God! And if you believe in him with the heart, you have ground to expect that you shall be enabled, by grace, according to your duty, to confess him with your mouth.”

“ I hope you will strive together in your prayers to God, that the truths of God here delivered, may be blessed to the glory of God, and the spiritual benefit of such as shall read them, and ponder them in their hearts; and that the promises made to our highest Lord EMMANUEL, and to us in him, may be now remarkably accomplished in the latter days, that “ the isles shall wait for his law;” that “ in his name the Gentiles shall trust;” and that “ his name shall endure for ever;” and “ upon his head the crown shall flourish!”

BUT our Lord Jesus was much displeased with the conduct of the disciples, and encourageth the little children to come unto him, and their parents in bringing them. Those who come to Christ themselves, should bring all they have with them, and confidently expect a kindly welcome from our Lord Jesus Christ. And they who are blessed in Christ themselves, should desire to have their children blessed in him; and should testify the true love they have for their children, by a concern about their souls; and the honour they have for the Lord Jesus, by devoting them to his worship and service. And we may present our children to Christ, now in heaven, that he may touch their hearts, by his Spirit and grace. And herein we may act faith upon the fullness and freedom of the grace of Christ, who has promised to pour his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring.

THE words contain a gracious call and invitation, directed by Christ to the rising generation, and a direction to all with reference thereto; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." And here we may notice, 1. The glorious Person speaking, and inviting perishing souls to himself; "Jesus said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me." Jesus said it, and you may trust his word, little children; Jesus, the Saviour of the world; Jesus, who saves his people from their sins, has said it, that little children, such as you are, are in his commission, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. 2. We may observe the persons to whom this gospel-call is directed; it is to you who are little children; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Let nothing be done to hinder them, for they shall

be as welcome as any. Little children, as soon as they are capable, ought to come to Christ; to come with their prayers and supplications to him, and to come to receive the blessing from him. 3. We may notice, that the call is laid down by Christ, in the most encouraging manner to the little children: when the disciples oppose them, he takes their part, and gives them abundant encouragement; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Little children have participated of Adam's first sin, and of the malignant influences thereof; and therefore our Lord doth make them welcome to partake of the riches of the grace of Christ, the grace of the second Adam, and of that righteousness which reigns unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He takes it ill at those who forbid them, and would exclude those whom he has received, and cast them out from the inheritance of the Lord; and he tells his disciples, that of such is the kingdom of heaven. The children of believing parents belong to the kingdom of heaven, and are members of the visible church; and to them pertain the privileges of visible church-membership, as among the Jews of old; for the Lord has said it, "I will be your God, and the God of your seed;" and Acts ii. 39. it is said, "The promise is unto you, and your children."

FROM these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation;

"THAT as the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ; so, whatever discouragements they may meet with in coming to Christ, yet they have abundant encouragement from himself, who hath said it, "Suffer the little

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“children to come unto me, and forbid them not;
“for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To show that the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ.

II. To speak of some of those discouragements that young people may meet with in coming unto Christ.

III. To speak of the heavenly exercise the rising generation are called and invited unto, namely, to come to the Lord Jesus in the way of faith, and believing on him whom God hath sent.

IV. To give a hint at some of those encouragements which the Lord Jesus hath given to the rising generation to come unto him. And,

V. To make some application of the doctrine.

I. We proceed to the first thing proposed, namely, To show that the rising generation have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ.

THE youngest of you are sinners, and a sinner needeth a Saviour; and Christ is the only Saviour, for there is no salvation in any other. And,

1. THE youngest of you are guilty of Adam's first sin, Rom. v. 12. “Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death
“passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” or, as it may be rendered, “in whom all have sinned.” And Rom. v. 19. “For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so, by the obedience

of one shall many be made righteous." Thus you see, that you and all the posterity of Adam are sinners, by the imputation of Adam's first sin; even as all the redeemed from among men are righteous, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, their Head and Representative in the covenant of promise. In Adam all mankind died, 1 Cor. xv. 22.; because they all sinned in him; for "the wages of sin is death." Infants are born under the power of spiritual death, and obnoxious to natural and eternal death, and death hath passed upon them, and all mankind, for that they all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.; that is, they sinned in Adam; for they could not sin in their own persons, prior to their being born in sin, and under the sentence of death, the proper desert of sin.

As mankind was made upright, and after God's image, Eccl. vii. 29.; so the covenant was made with mankind, not merely with the first man, as one individual of the species, but it was made with him, as the federal head and representative of his posterity. His first sin therefore was not merely the sin of one man, but the insurrection of the whole human nature against God. It is true, the fallen angels did every one of them act for themselves, and involved themselves in sin and misery: but it doth not therefore follow, that we could not be accessory to Adam's first sin, because we were not present to give a formal personal consent to what was done. Shall we poor creatures take it upon us to prescribe to God himself, that he cannot take one method of transacting with angels, and another with mankind? It was a thing equal in itself, to deal with mankind in the way of a covenant and federal representation; and we may be assured it was the best method, seeing a God of in-

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finite wisdom and goodness transacted with us in that manner. If Adam had stood, and his posterity had thus in him been confirmed in a state of happiness, the whole human race had applauded it, and praised God for it. It was therefore a transaction good and equal in itself; and if men of corrupt principles object against it, they only discover the corruption of their hearts, by replying against God; and they may consider how unfit they are to judge in a matter wherein they are so much parties themselves, and with what veneration they ought therefore to receive what God himself has revealed concerning this matter in his word. Had all mankind been in paradise, they could not have declined it, that God should transact with them in the way of a federal representation. None could have been more fit to have represented Adam's posterity than himself. Mankind had a surer prospect of happiness, by the good management of one, the fittest of mankind to act for the rest, than if every one had been left to act a part for himself; unless we suppose, that some of Adam's posterity would have been fitter to act a good part for their own personal interest, than Adam was to act a wise part for his own sake, and for the sake of all mankind his descendants. None of them could have had better abilities than Adam; and none of them could have had such strong motives to exert them, as the common parent of mankind, who, besides his personal interest, was made the trustee, and representative of his race and posterity.

THE youngest of you, yea, all mankind, are guilty of Adam's first sin. The inspired writer, Eccl. vii. 29. giving an account of the origin of all the sin, misery, and vanity, that now takes place among mankind, he lodges the fault and blame of all, not upon

one man, but upon the whole race of mankind: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." God made man upright, not merely one man, but he made mankind, the human nature upright, in the first original of it: and they (that is the human race, as represented by the first man) made apostasy from God, and sought out many inventions. Instead of resting in what God had found for them, they sought to mend themselves; and the law of their creation could not hold them, but they would be at their own disposal, and follow their own sentiments. To the same purpose God saith to Israel, and in them to all mankind, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." And how great and inexcusable was the sin of the human race! Man had an easy law to obey; and as the moral law was of undoubted excellency, so was the positive law likewise: for it was for man's safety that he had one tree forbidden, that he might know, that he as the vassal held all of God his superior; so that when all the creatures were subject to him, he might remember that he was still subject to God. This forbidden tree was a memorial to him of his mutable state, which was to be laid up by him for his greater caution: for man was created with a free-will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of; but his will was mutable to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof: it was in a manner a continual watch-word to him against evil. And the forbidden tree taught Adam, that his happiness did not lie in enjoying creatures, for there was a want in paradise: it was therefore in effect the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from themselves to God for happiness; and it was like unto a sign of emptiness, lifted up on the door of the creation, with

this inscription, "This is not your rest. So that upon the whole, man's ruin was most evidently owing to himself; "Man being in honour, continued "not, but became as the beasts that perish."

THE youngest of you have the greatest ground to be humbled before God for this, that you are guilty of Adam's first sin. And if you look into your own hearts, ye will see the features of the first Adam's face, the very lineaments of his first sin, in the complexion of your own souls. His posterity are infected with his sinful curiosity, (Gen. iii. 6. ;) they are more concerned to know new things, than to practise known truths. "Vain man would be wise, "though he be born like the wild ass's colt." They are ready to hearken to the "instruction that causeth to err." The eyes of their head often blind the eyes of their mind; and they are too much inclined to care for the body, at the expence of the soul. And how much are we inclined, with Adam, to hide our sin, or to extenuate it, and to transfer the guilt of it upon others? And seeing the sin of the first Adam is imputed to you, you can no otherwise be saved but by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, to the justification of life; and therefore every one of you have the greatest need of Christ, and of the grace of Christ, even of that grace which "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. THE youngest of you have an infinite need of Christ; for you have lost the image of God, Rom. iii. 19. You want that original righteousness which Adam had; that knowledge of God, of his law, and of his will; that holiness of affections, and that conformity of will to the divine law, which human na-

ture was endowed with at its first creation; and, having lost the image of God, you have thereby lost your immortality, and are become subject to death. Man, at his creation, was a freeholder of heaven; but now, by sin, you are enslaved to your corruptions. You have lost that calm and serenity of conscience, which was the blessing of man's primitive state; and now you have an accusing conscience, and a storm is raised in your breast. You have lost that love to God, and delight in him, which Adam had, and that filial dependence upon him, as a God and Father. You have lost all will and power to that which is spiritually good; and you are lost as to the very end of your creation, which was to see God in all his works, to gather in the revenue of his praise from all the inferior creatures; and to hand it up to him, and be the mouth of this lower part of the creation, by worshipping and praising God upon the earth, as the angels do in heaven.

THE youngest of you, then, have an infinite need of Christ, who restored that which he took not away, Psal. lxi. 4. He restored glory to God, and honour to his law; and he only can restore the image of God to man, and bring man into favour with God.

3. THE youngest of you stand in the greatest need of Christ; for your natures are corrupted, and you are carnal, and altogether sinful. You are morally unclean, and your natures are polluted, Job. xiv. 4.: for, "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? no, no not one." And the Psalmist doth acknowledge his original corruption, Psal. li. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me * : and our Lord hath deter-

* See these texts explained and vindicated, in the review of Mr. Campbell's principles.

mined it, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," John iii. 6. Man, considered in his corrupted state, is here called flesh; because the unrenewed man is fleshly and carnal, even in his most religious performances, and is carried out wholly by the principle of flesh within him. In supernatural mysteries he is blind and carnal, 1 Cor. ii. 14.; so that flesh and blood cannot reveal them to us, but the Father, Matth. xvi. 17.; and this fleshly mind doth move and operate powerfully in Atheists and heretics. And he is carnal in his performances, because, when he doth them, it is not from love to God, to exalt and honour him, but out of love to himself, to avoid some judgment or other. God takes notice of the corruption of your nature, Gen. vi. 5. Psal. xiv. 2. 3. and maketh it lie heavy upon the consciences of his own people in their new birth; and, while they are in this life, they are exercised with a daily conflict with it: you ought therefore to take notice of it, and be humbled for it. Your mind is clouded, and filled with spiritual darkness, Eph. v. 8. You see not the beauty and glory of Christ, nor the vileness of sin. And that your understandings are corrupted, doth appear from the vanity of your minds, and the swarms of vain thoughts which do lodge within you; and from your spiritual folly, that you prefer the worst things to the best; that you prefer a creature to God, earth to heaven, and the body to the soul; and that you mind only the present time, and forget eternity, and the world to come.

AND your will is corrupted in its powers, in so far that it is not only weakened, but disabled to duty. There is in your will an averfeness to good, and a proneness to evil, Jer. xiii. last. Hos. ii. 7.; and there is in your will an obstinacy and contumacy a-

gainst God, so that you are wilful in an evil course, and refuse to be reclaimed, Jer. viii. 6. Prov. viii. 36. Ezek. xviii. 31. Your will is corrupted and perverse, in reference to your great and ultimate end; for the natural man seeks not God and his glory for his highest end, but himself, Psal. xiv. 2. 3. "They are all gone aside." Thou art gone aside from God as thy rest, and as thy last end. All things are from God, and therefore all things ought to be directed to God, and to his glory; but turning aside from God to the idol of self, thou hast usurped the throne of God, and hast gathered in the rents of his crown to thyself. And this is thy case whilst thou art an unrenewed man; thou art wholly enslaved to sin, and canst do nothing but sin; hence the natural man is compared to an evil tree, that can bring forth nothing but evil fruit.

YOUR memory is corrupted; for you remember what you ought to forget, and forget what you ought to remember; you forget God's word and his works; you forget God's mercies and rods; you forget yourselves, and your sins; you forget your convictions, and the working of God's Spirit upon your hearts; and forget God himself, his grace, and love manifested in Christ Jesus, Is. lvii. 11. "Thou hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart:" and therefore are you so propense to all manner of evil; whereas the remembrance of God would be an excellent antidote against all sin.

AND your conscience is defiled, Tit. i. 15. There is a darkness and vail upon it; whereas, if the candle of the Lord were lighted, thou wouldest be amazed at thyself, and at thy condition. Thy conscience by sin is become senseless and stupid, hence it is called a

"feared conscience:" and if conscience at some times endeavours to exert itself, it is but weakly and faintly; conscience is too weak for corruptions, like Balaam, they will press forward to their wickedness, though conscience stand like an angel with a sword in his hand, to stop the way.

AND your affections are corrupted, in that they are placed and fixed upon wrong objects; they were given to men to be wings to their souls in their motions after God, but now they are become clogs and impediments to us in our approaches to God. And so corrupted are your affections, that they have usurped a dominion over your understanding, so that you judge as you affect, and not as matters are; hence you have drawn false conclusions about the state and condition of your own soul, as if it were safe, when you may well know that it is very bad.

You have ground to be humbled for your pollution by original sin; for original sin is the most diffusive sin: other sins are like particular sores, but this is the gangrene of the whole body; the understanding, the will, and the affections, are all defiled and infected with it: all other sins are like the streams, but this is the fountain; this is the flaming furnace in the inward man, and your actual sins, as so many sparks of hell, do flash forth from that burning lake within. And by it you are in a most deplorable condition; so that you are not capable to feel your sad condition, nor to get out of it, or return to God, from whom you have revolted, till sovereign grace interpose for your relief. Know therefore the desperate wickedness of thy heart, Jer. xvii. 9. Psal. xix. 13. A man's heart is like Peter's great sheet, Acts xi. 6. which was full of four-footed beasts, and creep-

ing things, all unclean. Look inward, and you will find that your sinful words and actions, though very dishonouring to God in themselves, are yet nothing to the sea of corruption within you, where you cannot reach the bottom. And as you are children of disobedience, so you are children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. "and were by nature children of wrath, as well as others." You are by nature, that is, by original sin, which is now natural to you; by it you are "children of wrath," that is, you are worthy of wrath, liable to it, and under it: wrath is your heirship, and you are born to wrath, as you are the children of the first Adam.

We say, considered in yourselves, you are liable to the wrath of God; for you have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and the Lord hath said it, "The soul that sinneth shall die." And you have broken God's law: now, thus saith the Lord, "Curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Let us consider that wrath is gone as wide as ever sin went. When angels sinned, wrath brake in upon them as a flood, 2 Pet. ii. 4. And when Adam sinned, the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's wrath and vindictive justice: all men and women are under this wrath; the Gentiles, that know not God, are under it, Rom. ii. 12. And you, who are young ones, are under this wrath of God; you were born under it, but will make yourselves twofold more so, if you do not flee from this wrath, by fleeing in to Jesus Christ, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come: and there needeth not be a surer mark of your being under this wrath, than that you never saw yourself to be under it, Is. xxvii. 11. 2 Thess. i. 8. Hos. iv. 6.

And no outward privileges can exempt you from this state of wrath : though you be descended of godly parents, and can say, " We have Abraham to our father ;" and though you have been baptized, and admitted to church-privileges, yet are you " children of wrath as well as others." There is wrath upon your body, it is a piece of cursed clay ; and there is wrath upon your soul, so that you can have no communion with God, while in a natural unconverted state, Psal. v. 5. Eph. ii. 12. There is wrath upon all your enjoyments, upon your basket and upon your store, Deut. xxviii. 17. ; and thou hast no security for a moment from the wrath of God coming on thee to the uttermost : and in a little, and thou knowest not how soon, death will be a dreadful messenger unto you ; it will come armed with wrath, and put a charge and summons in thy hand, to bid an eternal farewell to all things in this world, and to appear before the tribunal of God, and go to another world, where thou wilt have no portion but a treasure of wrath for evermore. It is in hell that the full floods of this wrath go over the prisoners for ever ; for it will be their sad and dreadful condition to be separated from the presence of the Lord, and to depart from Jesus Christ into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, where their worm will not die, and their fire shall never be quenched. Thus, by original sin, as well as actual transgressions, you are children of wrath ; and unless your nature be changed by the renewing grace of God, you must lie to all eternity under this load of divine wrath, and be " punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." We might likewise tell you of your sinful condition by your actual sins ; your disobedience to your parents, your sabbath-breaking ;

your neglecting of secret prayer, morning or evening ; your lying, and taking of the name of God in vain ; for the sake of which things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience : and we might likewise warn you of your perishing condition, by reason of your sin of unbelief, and the need you have of the Spirit of Christ " to convince you of sin, because you believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ," John xvi. 8. 9. By this sin of unbelief, Christ is despised and rejected by you ; and you " see no form nor comeliness in him, why he should be desired" by you, though he be truly the " desire of all nations, " and more excellent than all the mountains of prey." And you need not think to despise the love of the Father, the blood of the Son of God, and the promises of the gospel at an easy rate ; for, Mark xvi. 16. " He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved ; and he that believeth not, shall be damned."

II. BUT we proceed to the second thing proposed, namely, To mention some of those discouragements that young people may meet with in coming unto Christ. And,

I. SOME of you, who are the the rising generation, may be discouraged in coming unto Christ, from the temptations of Satan, tempting you to delay this blessed work of coming unto Christ, and believing on the Son of God ; secretly suggesting this thought, That it is soon enough for you to come to Christ : but you are called to come to Christ ; " The " Master is come, and calleth for you" by name ; and if you sit this call, you may never get another. There are young sprigs, as well as old logs, burning in the flames of hell ; and there are graves in the church-yard, just of your length. Or, perhaps,

you are tempted to security : when the Lord visited you with the rod and affliction, you then poured out a prayer, and came under many resolutions ; but, when the blast of trouble is over, you are now following your old course. But beware of despising the Lord's warnings : by these very troubles, Christ giveth so many knocks at the door of thy young and sinful heart ; and after all the refusals you have given him, yet he standeth and knocketh, saying, " Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; and if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. Or, you are tempted to despair : but consider that " Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him ;" that the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, is great unto the heavens ; and that he has proclaimed his name, " The Lord God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." Or possibly you are tempted to think hardly of the Lord's way, and of his yoke, as burdensome and uneasy : but know it for a certain truth, that " Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace : " and though the hearts of the children of Zion " may know their own bitterness, yet a stranger doth not intermeddle with their joy."

2. SOME of you may be discouraged in coming unto Christ, by carnal friends and relations that endeavour to divert you from following the Lord : for the best that ever lived have had trials of this sort ; but the Lord Jesus " giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength ; and they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall walk, and not weary, they shall run, and not faint."

3. You may perhaps be discouraged, from fears of falling away in the time of trial : but trust in the Lord at all times, for " in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting " strength : " and thus you shall be among the preserved in Christ Jesus ; you shall be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ; and be delivered from every evil work, and preserved to his heavenly kingdom. The Lord hath said it, and faithful is he who hath promised, Zech. x. 12. " I " will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall " walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord."

4. SOME of you may be discouraged, from a sense of your own sinfulness and unworthiness : but know that " worthy is the Lamb who was slain, and hath " redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every " kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The voice of angels is heard round about the throne, saying, with a loud voice, " Worthy is the Lamb " that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and " wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and " blessing." And you are warranted to trust his promise who hath said it, " Your righteousness is of " me, saith the Lord : and men shall be blessed in " him, and all nations shall call him blessed," Psal. lxxii. 17. Are any of you discouraged from the greatness of your sin ? then know, that Christ is the great God our Saviour, and that he hath proclaimed his name, saying, " It is I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," Is. lxiii. 1. 2. Or are you discouraged from the power of your corruptions ? Then take encouragement from his own word of promise, Rom. vi. 14. " Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, " but under grace." And Mic. vii. 19. " He will subdue our iniquities ; and thou wilt cast all their sins

"into the midst of the sea: thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn to our fathers in the days of old."

III. We proceed now, in the third place, to speak of the heavenly exercise which the rising generation are called and invited unto, *viz.* To come to the Lord Jesus Christ, by believing on him whom God hath sent.

1. THEN your coming to the Lord Jesus supposeth, that there is a call directed to you from a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, inviting you to come, to come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Matth. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Rev. xxii. 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely."

2. It supposeth that there is room in the love of God, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in God's covenant of promise, for your welcome and reception, who are the rising generation, Luke xiv. 22. "And yet there is room." John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

YOUNG ones, you may be verily persuaded that Christ calleth you by name, Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Christ is a public blessing; for

“ God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” As all the congregation of Israel had a good right and a warrant from God to look to the serpent lifted up, and be healed; so all that hear the gospel, and particularly you who are the rising generation, have the call and command of God to look unto Christ and be saved, who is the “salvation of God to the ends of the earth.” You have all access to this Tree of life, which groweth in the midst of the paradise of God, the “leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations;” and there is no cherubim nor flaming sword to hinder your approach unto it. Take a view of the encouraging promises; it is the voice of them all, Come, and welcome to Jesus Christ. Through the whole gospel, Christ never once made an objection to any that came to him with their sinfulness or unworthiness; but all his complaints are of their backwardness and unwillingness to come to him, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly, John v. 40. The vilest sinners that ever were, when they came to him, were made welcome; Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, and Paul, who had persecuted the church of God. Consider, young ones, that it was the great design of the covenant, that sinners, such as you are, might have the benefit of a Saviour, Is. lxi. 1. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

Consider with what pleasure the Lord Jesus undertook the work of your redemption, and with what cheerfulness he went through that work and labour of love, Psal. xl. 7. 8. he saith, "Lo, I come;" or "I hasten to come:" and when he is come, he saith, "It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish the work which the Father gave me to do;" viz. by pouring out his soul unto death, and making it an offering for sin, that we might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in his blood. Consider likewise, that it is the end of all the ordinances, that you may come unto Christ and be saved; for what saith the word? but that through Jesus is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. What say ministers? "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And what saith the sacrament? "This is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins unto many; drink ye all of it." Our Lord Jesus doth feed in the gardens, and he gathers lilies. The day of the sinners closing with him, is the day of the gladness of his heart. And that blessed time, wherein the soul is determined to come to Christ, is that very hour wherein he rejoiceth in Spirit; and seeing the travail of his soul, he is satisfied. His forbearance with sinners, and the welcome they get when they come, discover abundantly his grace and good-will towards men. He accepts of a weak mint and essay at coming to him, even of a look, or the breathing out of the desires of the soul after himself, as the desire of all nations. He is most pressing and earnest in bearing home the calls and of-

fers of his grace. How long-suffering is he, and with what patience doth he wait? even "till his head be filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night." Our Lord Jesus is much weight-ed with it, when sinners will not come to him; it is accounted by him an affronting him, and a treading the blood of the covenant under foot: it drew tears from his eyes, and he wept bitterly over Jerusalem, because, like many of you, they knew not the things that belong to their peace. The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; you may therefore trust him with your salvation; and seeing you are sinners of Adam's house, you are therefore warranted to intrust your souls with him, upon his own call in the word, whose name is called Jesus, "because he saveth his people from their sins." And thus you see, that you, who are the rising generation, are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and may expect a gracious reception from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

3. Your coming unto Christ implieth in it, that the powerful efficacy of divine grace is exerted in renewing you in the spirit of your minds, and making you willing in the day of the Mediator's power, Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him."

4. Your coming unto Christ, implieth in it a conviction of your sinful and lost condition, as you are children of the first Adam; that you are children of wrath, and that your iniquities do separate betwixt God and you; that you are fatherless and orphans,

and cannot help yourselves by your prayers, duties, or righteousness; and that you can have relief no otherwise but in him, in whom the fatherless do find mercy, Hos. xiv. 3. The light of the Spirit of God in conviction is like unto the light of the sun, making all things to appear as they really are; but many see their sin and perishing condition only by discourse: but when the Spirit of God is bringing a soul to Christ, he fixeth the vain mind of a sinner upon the due consideration of sin in its nature, tendency, and end, John xvi. 8. 9.; and he discovers to the soul the real greatness of sin, by manifesting the real greatness of God against whom it is committed, Hos. iv. 4. Is. vi. 3.; by giving realizing views of the justice of God, who will by no means clear the guilty; of the infinite majesty of God, Job xxxvii. 22.; and of the holiness and purity of God, who hateth all the workers of iniquity: hence the convinced sinner is pierced with perplexing grief, and is made to despair of any deliverance by the law or the first covenant, and is made to enquire into the way of relief, by Christ in the gospel, and to pant after that salvation that is in him, from present distress and future misery, Acts ii. 37.

5. YOUR coming unto Christ, implieth in it your coming to him, as the great God your Saviour, and as the Lord your righteousness: and your believing on him, and receiving him, as offered to you in the gospel, as your Saviour and Redeemer; it is to believe the report of the gospel, that Christ is the Messiah, the mercy promised to the fathers; that he is the Saviour of the world; and that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that Christ is given of God to you in the gospel; for this is God's record, "that he hath given to us eternal life, and this

"life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life." God giveth his Son to you, to be received by you, with a particular application to your own souls case and exigencies: Christ is exhibited in the word, as the great propitiation, to be received by you in particular, upon the warrant of the free call, and encouraging promise of the gospel. As conviction is particular, "Thou art the man," saith the Spirit; so the application of faith is particular, though it be sometimes accompanied with a small degree of sensible comfort, *II. xlv. 24.*

6. Your coming unto Christ, implieth in it your being espoused and betrothed to him, as the one husband raised from the dead, in a marriage-covenant: "Ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," *Rom. vii. 4.* "And I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord," *Hos. ii. 19. 20.* The soul going forth, and beholding king Solomon with the crown upon his head in the day of his espousals, cometh to the marriage of the King's son, to be betrothed to him for ever; and the soul's motion to Christ is the fruit of God's promise of betrothing souls to himself, in loving-kindness and in tender mercies. You are thus, through grace, to come to, and trust in the Lord Jesus for your all of righteousness and strength; to devote yourselves to him; to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him; to come with him from Lebanon, to look to him from the top of Amana and Hermon, from the lions dens, the mountains of the leopards; and to take him for

your all of consolation, who is the consolation of Israel.

IV. We proceed now, in the fourth place, to speak of some of those encouragements which the Lord Jesus hath given unto the rising generation to come unto him. And,

1. THE full and ample call of Christ in the gospel, is most encouraging to engage poor sinners to come unto Christ, and particularly to encourage the rising generation to come unto him; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." The call is directed to all the sons of men, and giveth them a good warrant to come, Prov. viii. 4. "To you I call, O men; and my voice is to the sons of Adam."

2. THE promise of grace and strength to enable you to come, is a noble encouragement to come to Jesus Christ, Psal. xxii. 30. 31. "A seed shall serve him.—They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, and that he hath done this." And the promise of welcome to all that come, is most encouraging, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out: or, as the word may be rendered, Him that is a-coming unto me, (that is, but essaying to come) I will in nowise cast him out."

3. THAT God is most glorified by those that come to Christ, is encouraging to come; and that God has condescended to gather in to himself the revenue of his glory, from the salvation of sinners by Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. 7. is a most comfortable encouragement, and sure warrant for sinners to come to

Christ; seeing, in this method of salvation by him, there is "glory to God in the highest, as well as "peace on earth, and good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. And that very moment you come to Christ, you put the crown upon his head, and ascribe glory unto him; and his glory to all eternity shall be great in your salvation, Psal. xxi. 25. That moment you fall in with God's great and highest design of creating all things, and upholding them to this very day, which is, that the burden of the praise of Emmanuel might be lifted up, and that to the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward you through Christ Jesus; and you put in your note in a consort with the angels, and the redeemed from amongst men, in celebrating the grace of Christ, and that salvation he hath wrought, and the glory of God manifested therein: and that moment you come to Christ, there is a shout and a song among the angels of God; for "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

4. God the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, John iv. 15 And this is a sure warrant, and good encouragement for you to come unto Christ, and to believe on him as the Saviour of the world. This world had been the very suburbs of hell, upon the entrance of sin, if the Son of God had not been sent to be the Saviour of the world; and God had never received any thing more of a revenue of glory from this lower world, if the Son had not been sent to be the Saviour of the world. But, behold, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt "among us;" and there is a shout among the seraphims, that "the whole earth is full of his glory," Il. vi. 3.; because God had more glory from the o-

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bedience of his eternal Son, than from the obedience of all the hosts of angels, since ever the world began. The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest, taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God; and, in the nature of man, he finished this work of our redemption; and therefore every man that hears this everlasting gospel, is warranted to come unto him, and to trust in him with a full confidence of faith, to obtain salvation by him, who is the Saviour of the world.

5. It is encouraging to you to come to Jesus Christ, that when poor sinners come unto him, "he seeth the travail of his soul, and is satisfied, *Is. liii. 11.* He had fore travail of soul, by the sword of justice awakening against him, that it might be quiet as to you; he had fore travail of soul, by the hidings of his Father's face, and drinking of the brook in the way, that torrent of vindictive wrath which interposed betwixt you and the city of God. But, so to speak, he reckons himself well rewarded, and is satisfied, for all the fore travail of his soul, in the garden of Gethsemane, in his agony, and upon the cross in Calvary, in his being, through his whole life, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; when he seeth the rising generation coming to him for life, for righteousness, and strength; and seeth you coming to God, through him, as to thy rest, portion, and everlasting blessedness.

V. We now proceed to make some application of this doctrine; and that, by addressing ourselves,
1. To the present generation. 2. To the rising generation.

(1.) THEN, We would exhort you, who are the

present generation, to imitate the example laid before you in our text, by bringing your children, and the rising generation, to Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant.

AND, in order to this, you would be concerned to have some knowledge of Christ, and acquaintance with him yourselves: like these parents here spoken of, you must have some love to Christ, and an esteem of the grace of Christ, and an expectation of a gracious reception from him. These people here spoken of, they believed that Christ was both able and willing to help them; they came to Christ themselves, and brought their children, their best things with them, as an offering unto him. They had been with him, we may suppose, in some mount Tabor of manifestation, and found that it was good to be there; and therefore thought it was best to have their children there likewise. Imitate their example likewise in this, that they had first a concern about their own souls, and then were deeply concerned about the souls of their children; and in that they were persuaded it would be well with the souls of their children, if they were Christ's, and no way else: and therefore they devoted both themselves and their children to the Lord Jesus, in whom alone the families of the earth shall be blessed.

LET this be your exercise, to bring your children to Christ, that they may obtain "the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation;" for, by nature, they are children of wrath, and under the curse. Bring them to him for instruction, that your children may be all taught of the Lord; and great shall be the blessedness and peace of your children. Bring them to him for sal-

vation and redemption ; for he is a living Redeemer.* Bring them to him for quickening and spiritual life ; for they are dead in trespasses and sins, and Christ is the resurrection and the life. Bring them unto him, that their persons may be justified, and their natures sanctified ; for he is “ made of God unto us sanctification, and in him all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.

CONSIDER the marks and characters of such who may expect to succeed in bringing their children to Christ. And, [1.] Such as make an acceptable offering of them to the Lord, they bring them to Christ, as the altar of acceptance, Is. lvi. 7. “ Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on mine altar.” [2.] They are importunate with the Lord for his grace and help ; they are humble and self-denied, and after seeming repulses, wait patiently on for an answer of peace, Matth. xv. 22. 24. 25. 28. “ And, behold, a woman of Canaan cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil : But he answered her not a word. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me : but he answered and said, It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” [3.] They maintain honourable thoughts of Christ, and they believe and trust to his word of grace and promise, John iv. 50. “ Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had

"spoken unto him, and he went his way: and him-
"self believed, and his whole house."

BUT it may be for a lamentation, that many of us, instead of bringing our children to Christ, have provoked the Lord to leave both ourselves and the rising generation; 1. By stoutness of heart, in not being humbled for our original sin, that both we and our children sinned in the first Adam, that we have lost the image of God, and that our natures are universally corrupted. 2. By our ignorance of Christ; for, had we attained to more acquaintance and communion with him, we might have spoken of him as of a friend and an acquaintance to our children. 3. By our unbelief, rejecting many an offer of Christ, and distrusting the promise given to us and to our children, Acts ii. 39. 4. By our carnality and worldly-mindedness; that little of Christ was to be seen about us, either in our words or actions: and by our formality, in our closets and family-duties; that, if we had been spiritual and lively, might have transmitted a savour of Christ to our children, and to others about us.

BUT let the present generation be excited to this necessary duty of bringing the rising generation to Christ, from a consideration of the encouragements the Lord hath given to you in his word. Consider, that as the promise is to you and to your children, so these who have brought their children to the Lord, have met with a gracious reception: thus, when Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, her offering was accepted. Consider, the Lord has promised to pour his Spirit upon your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, Is. xlv. 4. 5.; and that he has promised that Christ shall have a seed to serve him, and

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that his name shall be remembered to all generations, Psal. xxii. 30. and xlv. 17. And consider, that God hath promised to circumcise your hearts, and the hearts of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, Deut. xxx. 6. And in bringing your children to the Lord, in the strength of grace, fix your faith upon these his words of promise; and, in so doing, you may be assured of success in this duty and exercise.

AND if the present generation would bring the rising generation to Christ, then they would be directed, 1. To come to Christ themselves, as to a "living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious," 1 Pet. ii. 4.; and to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, who "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:" to be humbled for their own sins, Psal. xxxviii. 18.; and to be as doves in the valleys, every one mourning for their own iniquities: and to be humbled for the sins of the present generation, the profanity, Atheism, lewdness, wantonness, drunkenness, and scoffing at religion, which prevails; for the public indignities done to the Lord Jesus, by all ranks, by the courts of judgment, by the state's invading the rights of the Redeemer's crown, and by church-judicatories, their silent and sinful connivance at all the dishonours done to the Lord of glory, and by intrusions made upon the heritage of the Lord; thus taking away the bread of life from the souls of the rising generation. And let your hearts be deeply affected with the signs of the Lord's anger, and with the apostasy of this generation. It is matter of deep humiliation, that the false prophet and the unclean spirit are passing uncontrouled through the land; the grossest of errors are spread in all corners,

to the perdition and destruction of the souls of men ; the Supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is opposed and overthrown ; the work of the Spirit of God, in the conversion and sanctification of sinful men, is denied and subverted ; and self-love is declared to be the principle, rule, and standard of all religious actions, and self-interest to be their main and ultimate end : if these foundation-truths be buried, what shall become of the rising generation, but that they will lay aside all regard to God and religion, and be drenched in mere Atheism and infidelity, to the dishonour of God, and to their own eternal destruction ? And what reason have you to lament the neutrality of some that have the root of the matter, and are, notwithstanding, continuing in a conjunction with these who have denied those foundation-truths, and are associated with those that have given up with Christ's Headship, and taken their holding of the powers of the earth ? Besides that, it might be made to appear, that such an association is most unwarrantable ; as thereby they partake of other men's sins, do not bring them to a conviction of these enormities that are censurable by the word of God, and thus suffer sin to lie upon them ; and, in opposition to the rule of the word, they do not withdraw from, but continue in conjunction with those that walk most disorderly. It is most manifest, that such a course as this, cannot possibly be a proper mean to assert and defend the royalties of the Redeemer's crown, nor to maintain the purity of doctrine, the government, worship, and discipline of Christ's house, and transmit them faithfully to posterity ; which church-officers and church-judicatories are most sacredly bound to do, not only from the solemn oath of God, in our Covenants, National and Solemn League, but by the very nature and duties of their of-

see, by all the rules laid down in God's holy word, and by all the ties of nature ; that is, by humanity itself, and the love and regard they ought naturally to have for their own posterity, and the rising generation. Eli's coldness and neutrality in the matters of God, was severely punished in that good man ; and it was in itself a dreadful judgment to the generation wherein he lived, as it was an effectual bar in the way of reformation ; and as the whole tribes of Israel were thereby hardened in their course of apostasy from the Lord, and, as the fruit of it, were brought under most dreadful marks of the divine displeasure. 2. If you, who are the present generation, would bring your children to Christ, then set apart some time for secret fasting, and the prayer of faith for your children, Job i. 5. ; and instruct them daily in the good ways of the Lord, encouraging them in well-doing, and correcting them for their faults. Talk with them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. vi. 7. Talk with them of their baptismal vows, and of their warrant to believe in the Lord Jesus, and of their duty to devote themselves to the Lord, as you have endeavoured, through grace, to do it in their name. Talk with them of the love of God, in sending his Son to the world, and of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ; of their duty to love the Lord, and of the promise of grace, to enable them to love him, Deut. xxx. 6. Talk with them, and tell them of the works of God for this land, in our glorious reformation, and wonderful revolution ; " Walk about Zion, " and go round about her ; tell the towers thereof ; " mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, " that ye may tell it to the generation following : " for this God is our God for ever and ever ; he will

“be our Guide even unto death,” Psal. xlviii. 12. 13. 14. Talk with them, and tell them of the solemn engagements these lands are under, to promote reformation, and to walk closely with God, by our Covenants, National and Solemn League; and tell them of our backslidings and defections from the Lord, and of the breaches and violations of the vows of God. Talk with them of God’s wonderful appearances for us, and of their duty to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Tell them of the ordinances, the pleasant palaces of Zion, where the King is held in the galleries; and of the promises of God, which are her bulwarks. Let it be your exercise, “to show to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord; and his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, that you should make them known to your children: that the generations to come might know them; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, Psal. lxxviii. 4. 5. 6. 7. Talk with them of God’s covenant of grace and promise, which is God’s testimony established in Jacob, and his law appointed in Israel. Talk with them of the comprehensive blessing and promise of this covenant, that “this God is our God for ever and ever.” Talk with them of the absoluteness and freedom of this covenant; and of the righteousness of Christ, the only proper condition of this covenant, which being fulfilled, the rising generation, as well as others, may warrantably put in a claim for all the blessings of the covenant, in Christ’s right, and for Christ’s sake; and that such a claim will be certainly sustained in the court of Heaven. And tell them to set their

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hope in God, who hath raised Christ from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

WE now proceed to conclude this discourse, by directing a word to you who are the rising generation, in an use of *Examination and Consolation*.

EXAMINATION.

1. IT is necessary that you examine and try yourselves, whether or not you have as yet come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.

(1.) THEN, is it your exercise, with young Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. to prepare your hearts, to seek the Lord God of your fathers? Early seekers of Christ shall not seek him in vain; for those that seek him early shall find him, Prov. viii. 17. Young seekers of the Lord have some insight into the evil of sin, and they are tenderly affected with it; young Josiah's heart was tender, and he wept before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 21. 27. 30.; he wept not only for his original sin, and his actual sins, but for the sins of the land, and the people among whom he lived: and is this your exercise? The voice of prayer is heard among young seekers; they read the scriptures, and the word of the Lord is precious to them; and they devote themselves to the Lord; to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Josiah, while he was yet young, in the sixteenth year of his age, "made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his testimonies with all his heart, and with all his soul," 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. But, in order to your devoting yourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duties, you must, by faith, take hold of God's covenant:

of promise ; seeing you can no otherwise be accepted, but by the righteousness of Christ, and no otherwise be assisted, but by the grace of Christ, which is exhibited to you in the promise of God's covenant.

(2.) Do ye believe in the Son of God? Have you got a sight of the King in his beauty ; and was your soul made to follow hard after him ; and were your desires drawn out after the “ desire of all nations ?” Is Christ precious to you, and “ more than another beloved ? for to those that believe he is “ precious,” 1 Pet. ii. 7. And do you account all things but loss and dung to win Christ, and to be found in him, not having your own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of Christ ? to be found in him, as Noah was found in the ark, and as the manslayer was found in the city of refuge.

(3.) HAVE your hearts been made to burn with love to the Lord Jesus Christ ? Have you seen him to be the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely ? Do you love him, and breathe after fellowship with him, and nearness to him, saying with the church, “ Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, “ where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy “ flock to rest at noon ?” Song i. 7. Do you love him and keep his commandments, and breathe after holiness and conformity to him ? Do you love his ordinances, and esteem a day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere, and delight in the place where his honour dwelleth ? Do you love his people, and account them the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all your delight ? Do you prefer Zion to your chiefest joy ; and are you affected with the desolations of the sanctuary, and grieved for the affliction of Joseph ? Do you rejoice when he is honour-

ed; and do the reproaches of those that reproach him fall upon you? or is there nothing so humbling to you, as that you have so little love to Christ; nothing a greater burden to you, than the weakness of thy love to Christ? and is there nothing so comfortable to you as the promise of the Spirit, to manifest the glory of Christ to your soul, John xvi. 14.; and to shed his love abroad in your hearts? Then you are of the number of those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and of these little children, of whom is the kingdom of God.

EXHORTATION.

WE now proceed to a word of *Exhortation*; and may the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, persuade and determine you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is come in the name of the Lord to save you, and who is come, that you may have life, and have it more abundantly.

1. WE exhort you to believe in the Son of God; for this is to come to Christ, and this is the work of God, to believe in him whom God hath sent. Believe the record of God concerning his Son; and "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life," 1 John v. 11. 12. You may well believe what God testifieth; but God testifieth that he hath given to you eternal life, and that this life is in his Son, as the Spring and Fountain of this life: and he testifieth that he hath given to you his Son; for he that hath the Son hath life. Faith has Christ, has the Son; and faith only has him, because God has given him; for faith can have nothing but what God gives. God gives Christ, and faith receiveth him, and hath him in possession: but he is given to many that do not receive him; and this is their

unbelief, that they do not, and will not receive God's gift of Christ, and of life in him. For though Christ be given in possession only to those that by faith receive him, yet Christ, and life in him, is given unto all that hear the gospel, in the offer and right to put in your claim to Christ, and life in him as yours; and every one of you is warranted to receive him as yours, and lay claim to him, and all the blessings of his purchase, as your own, in a way of grace. He is given of God to you, to be your Kinsman-Redeemer, Job xix. 25. Is. ix. 6. He is given to be a light to you that sit in darkness, in the region and shadow of death; to be a Ransomer, to proclaim the gospel-jubilee, and liberty to the captives, Is. lxi. 1. He is given to be a covenant to the people, Is. xlix. 8.; to be the new-covenant Head, the Surety and Trustee of the covenant, and to dispense all the blessings of the covenant. He is given to be a Restorer of paths to dwell in, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; to be thy Head and Husband, to betrothe thee unto him for ever; to be a leader to thee through all thy dark bewildered steps; to be a Saviour to thee from all thy sins; to be a Physician to heal all thy plagues; and to be the Salvation of God to the ends of the earth.

WHAT God hath said and recorded, you may, and ought to believe: now God hath said, that he offereth, and giveth to you life, and Christ the Prince of life; that he giveth to you life, and Christ the Fountain of life. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, 1 John v. 10. Unbelief doth consist in discrediting what God hath said. Now the sin of unbelief, is not your disbelieving that God giveth Christ to the elect, that he giveth Christ to a

thers; but your not believing that God offereth and giveth Christ to you in particular, and that you have a warrant and right to accept of him. Thus it was with the Jews; the promise was to them and to their children, Acts ii. 39.; but they did not credit the word of salvation sent unto them, but rejected the counsel of God against themselves. And thus, when the brazen serpent was lifted up before all the congregation of Israel; if multitudes of them perished by not looking up to the brazen serpent, it was not because the remedy was not offered and given to them as well as the rest of the congregation, but because they did not look to it, nor credit God's word that a look would cure them.

2. WE exhort you to come to Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant: and it is the voice of Christ to you who are the rising generation; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Our Lord commandeth you to be called; and we say to you, as it was said to the blind man, Mark x. 49: "Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee." He calleth for your hearts; "My son give me thy heart." He calleth you to come into a marriage-relation to him, and to sweet fellowship with him, upon the mountains of myrrh, and the hills of frankincense, till the day break, and the shadows flee away. He calleth you to come, with all your sins, to be pardoned; with all your plagues, to be healed; with all your wants, to be supplied; and with all your burdens, to be relieved.

As to you who are advanced in years, though it is in youth he ordinarily brings in to himself, yet he is sovereign that way. O sinner, if forty, if fifty years

old, we say, yet even now is the word of this salvation sent unto you; rise, for he this moment calleth you. Thus he calleth some at the eleventh hour; and thus Paul was called when advanced in years, 1 Cor. xv. 8. "And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

AND if you, who are the rising generation, would be directed how to come, then come, depending on God's word of promise for grace and strength to come; for he has said it, Psal. xxii. 31. "They shall come, and they shall declare his righteousness." Come, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, Heb. xii. 2.; and say with the church, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Come in a mourning frame, that you have been so long a-coming, that you have been amongst the last to bring back the King: and come rejoicing, that you are yet called and invited to come; for "Blessed are you who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

COME then to him with all your hosannas, and praises of faith, Mat. xxi. 15. 16.; for out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he has perfected praise. Come to him with all your supplications and prayers of faith, to be perfumed with his incense; and come to him with the confidence of faith. And in coming to him, depend upon the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of faith; for it is the work of the Spirit to glorify Christ, John xvi. 14. And when Jesus is seen in his glory, then your souls will follow hard after him, as the chariots of Amminadib; and the language of thy heart will be, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God."

CHRIST'S CALL to the rising generation.

Considered and applied in

THREE SERMONS.

GEN. xxviii. 10. 11. 12. 13. 19.

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night,——and lay down in that place to sleep: and he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, and the God of Isaac.— And he called the name of that place Bethel.

[The second discourse on this subject.]

WE may notice, from these words, and their connection in this chapter, that Jacob had this vision in his youth, and in the day of his distress, when he was in exile from his father's house, and fled from the face of Esau his brother, who sought his life.

In the words, we may remark more particularly,
1. The season of this manifestation; it was when Jacob was going from Beersheba towards Haran, going from his native country to a foreign land, in compliance with the call of God's Providence. 2. The manner in which the manifestation was given; it was in a night-vision; and this was one of the ways in

which God spake unto the fathers; but he hath now, in these last times, spoken unto us by his own Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. 3. The manifestation itself: Behold, "a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached heaven." This ladder was an emblem of Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And the angels are said to *ascend* and *descend*, as being, at his command, in the administration of his kingdom, Heb. i. 14. John i. 51. And he saw "the Lord standing above it;" God as in Christ reconciling the world to himself, proclaiming his covenant of promise, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. 4. The gracious and kindly impression this manifestation had upon Jacob; he says, "This is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven. And he called the name of the place Bethel." *Bethel signifies the house of God*; though it was a solitary place, yet the divine presence made it to Jacob the house of God, and the gate of heaven.

From these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation:

"THAT the time of youth is a special season of Bethel-manifestations, wherein God doth manifest to the souls of men the glory of Christ, and doth reveal himself, as a reconciled God in Christ, and condescends to shew unto them his holy covenant of promise."

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To offer a few remarks concerning these Bethel-manifestations, which the Lord frequently conde-

scends to bless the sons of men with, in the days of their youth.

II. SPEAK a little of these manifestations, and shew what it is he doth manifest and reveal to the rising generation, in the days of their youth. And,

III. APPLY the doctrine.

I. WE proceed to the first thing proposed, to offer a few remarks concerning these Bethel-manifestations, which the Lord frequently condescends to bless the sons of men with, in the days of their youth. And,

I. WE remark, that there is a Bethel-manifestation of Christ in his glory, in the morning of conversion, when the soul is first visited with the day-spring from on high. This was the privilege of Paul, in the day that he was effectually called, Acts ix. compared with 1 Cor. xv. 8. "And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." The day of his conversion was his birthday, wherein he was born from above. He was a man advanced in years, and had long opposed the gospel, and rejected the offers of grace; and therefore looks on himself as one born out of due time: yet it was a blessed time to his soul, and the best day that ever he saw; it was to him a day of manifestation, wherein he saw the holy One and the Just, and heard the voice of his mouth. And so is it, in some measure, to all that are effectually called: Though every one cannot distinctly tell the day and time of their first meeting with Christ; yet every one of them has got such a glimpse of the glory of Christ, as has drawn their heart, their trust, and the desires of their soul, towards himself.

2. We remark, that the Lord's people have Bethel meetings with Christ in the morning of a renewed manifestation, after they have been mourning without the sun, and walking in darkness, having no light. And they may be said to attain such Bethel manifestations, (1.) When he manifests himself unto them in the glory of his person, in his offices, and in the freedom and permanency of his love and grace; and in his comfortable relations, mediation, and powerful intercession, John xiv. 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;—and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." (2.) When he looseth their bonds, and they are made to walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, Psal. cxvi. 16. And when he hears their prayers, and gives them gracious and comfortable returns: "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." And Psal. cxvi. 1. 2. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications: because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." (3.) When their souls are made, in a lively exercise of faith, to feed upon his word; when he speaketh into their hearts, and converseth with them by his word, and the motions of his Spirit upon their souls, Luke xxiv. 32. "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (4.) When they attain, through grace, a Bethel-nearness to God, Song i. 3. "The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad, and rejoice in thee: we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee." Sometimes Christians have attained such nearness to the Lord, that they have expressed it

that they thought God could not have been so near a soul upon earth; and some have been made to cry out, "Hold, Lord, for I can hold no more, for I am an earthen vessel;" because their old bottles were like to break to shivers, with a fill of that new wine of fellowship and communion with God. (5.) When they have had such Bethel-manifestations, that he has drawn by the vail, and they have seen the King in his beauty, and beheld the land that is afar off; and when their graces have been excited, and drawn forth into a lively exercise, by fresh influences of the Holy Spirit: and thus their spices have been made to flow out; and the Beloved has come into his garden, to see the beds of spices, and to gather lilies. (6.) When they have had Bethel-intimations made unto them: when the Lord has said to them, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee; and I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee:" when, with power and evidence of his Spirit, he saith "To them who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not;" and encourageth them with such a word, "Fear not, I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified; he is risen, as he said; come, see the place where the Lord lay." (7.) When he giveth Bethel-communications unto their souls; when he giveth strength to them in their weakness, and life to them in their deadness; when he giveth to them peace and pardon, and giveth to them himself, which is more than all other blessings, Rev. ii. 28. "And I will give him the morning-star." He giveth them sometimes grapes from Eschol, the first-fruits of the land of promise, a Pisgah-view of the land afar off, a prelibation and foretaste of glory, in giving them some drops of that wine that goeth down sweetly, making the lips of them that are asleep to speak.

Thus, sometimes they are made to begin some notes of the song of the redeemed here below ; and have such communion and fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, that it is to them the gate of heaven, and the suburbs of glory.

3. We remark, that there are some means and ordinances of God's appointment, wherein the followers of Christ are privileged with these manifestations. It is in the sanctuary, in the attendance upon public ordinances, that they see his power and his glory, Psal. lxxiii. v. 2. It was in hearing the gospel preached, that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith ; and it was by the ministry of the word, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, to attend to the things that were spoken. It is in the field of meditation, that they get sometimes a refreshing manifestation of the glory of the Lord : " When " I remember thee upon my bed, saith the Psalmist, " my soul followeth hard after thee." And it is in reading and searching the scriptures, that they behold the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 18. " Often," said an eminent saint, " have I seen the invisible God ; " and when I saw him, it was in his word." And it was in the duty of prayer, Gen. xxxii. 24. 30. that Jacob had a most remarkable manifestation of the glory of Christ. He wrestled with the Angel of the covenant till the breaking of the day, " and he " blessed him there : and Jacob called the name of " the place Peniel ; for I have seen God face to face, " and my life is preserved."

4. We remark, that there are some seasons wherein the Lord condescends to give Bethel-manifestations to his disciples and followers ; such as, when they are lamenting after the Lord, and seeking him

with an holy restless activity, Song iii. 3. "I sought
 "him whom my soul loveth.—It was but a little
 "I passed from them, when I found him whom my
 "soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him
 "go." When humbled for their own sins, and the
 sins of the land, which have provoked him to with-
 draw: thus, when Daniel was exercised in this man-
 ner, it was intimated to him, "O Daniel, a man
 "greatly beloved," Dan. ix. 23. When suffering
 for the cause and interest of Christ: thus Moses had
 a vision of Christ in a flame of fire out of the midst
 of a bush, when he was bearing the reproach of
 Christ at the back of the mount Horeb, and was
 there feeding Jethro's sheep: and John, when in the
 isle Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus, had the most
 refreshing manifestations of the glory of Christ, whose
 countenance is like the sun shining in his strength.
 When a person has difficult work to undertake at the
 Lord's command: thus Moses and Aaron had a ma-
 nifestation of the glory of the Lord, and could say,
 "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us."
 When a soul is tenderly affected with Christ's ab-
 sence, and is mourning, because the Comforter is far
 away, John xx. 11. 15. 16. "But Mary stood
 "without at the sepulchre weeping.—Jesus saith
 "unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seek-
 "est thou? She supposing him to be the gardener,
 "saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence,
 "tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take
 "him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary: she turn-
 "ed herself, and said unto him, Rabboni, which is
 "to say, Master. Mary Magdalene came, and told
 "the disciples that she had seen the Lord." And in
 times of affliction, and in the days of youth: Jacob
 was at this time in his youth, and was destitute and
 afflicted, being an exile from his father's house;

and he has a Bethel-manifestation of the glory of the Lord; and "he called the name of the place "Bethel."

5. WE remark, that frequently the most sensible and comfortable manifestations are attained to in the days of youth; for not only to Jacob, but to Solomon also, did the Lord appear in his youth, 1 Kings iii. 5. "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon "in a dream by night."

6. WE remark, that sometimes these manifestations are surprising. Jacob saith, "The Lord is in "this place, and I knew it not." They fill the heart with an holy awe and reverence of God; "How "dreadful is this place!" said Jacob: and they bring along with them some sweet taste of heart-warming, soul-refreshing communion with God; "This is the "house of God, this is the gate of heaven." Christ is the gate by which the righteous enter in; and a meeting with him brings the soul to the suburbs of heaven.

7. WE remark, that the memory of manifestations of God in youth, remains with the saints through their pilgrimage; thus Jacob could not all his life forget the manifestations of God in his youth; and the thoughts of them were fresh and supporting to him on his deathbed, Gen. xlviii. 3. "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in Canaan, and "blessed me." And the Lord himself doth keep a record of his gracious visits to souls in their youth: hence it was that he said to Jacob, "I am the God "of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and "vowedst the vow."

8. We remark, that frequently the Lord doth make use of his rod in the days of youth. As we have formerly observed, it was Jacob's case; so, if it is thy case, reader, then plead the promise of God's covenant; "I will cause you to pass under the rod," and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant," Ezek. xx. 37. The design of the rod is to bring you into the bond of the covenant; and the Lord himself hath undertaken to bring you, though you are neither able nor willing to come of yourselves. This bond of the covenant will not rot in the grave, for it is an everlasting covenant: and the blessings of this covenant are free to needy sinners, such as you are: hence the blessings of the covenant, for their freedom, are called *mercies*, the "sure mercies of David." Mercy, I am sure, will answer thy case, be what it will: O, then, trust a promising God, and put the work in his hand, who has said it, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant."

II. We proceed, in the second place, to speak a little of these manifestations, and to shew what it is he doth manifest and reveal to the rising generation, in the days of their youth, And,

1. They get a manifestation of Jesus Christ, the Mediator betwixt God and man. Jacob saw a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven: this ladder was an emblem of Christ, who is called, "The way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And he is the Mediator between God and man, through whom we approach unto God. Christ the Son of God, like Jacob's ladder, was set upon the earth, in his incarnation and birth at Bethlehem; and the top of it reached heaven, in his Deity and

divine nature. Thus, when he was upon earth, he affirmed of himself that he was likewise in heaven: "No man hath ascended to heaven, but the Son of man which came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." The ladder, the foot of it upon the earth, and the top of it in heaven at the same time, was an emblem of Christ in his person, God-man, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Heaven and earth are brought together, through Christ's mediation; and there is an union by him betwixt God and man, an union of peace and reconciliation, an union of friendship, and an union of end and design. And, through him, there is a blessed intercourse and communion betwixt heaven and earth; for, through him, by one Spirit, we have access to the Father, and come to God, the Judge of all; and, through him, we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God: and we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, through the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, by the vail of his flesh. This ladder is fixed fast in the earth, in his satisfaction upon the cross, in his death and deep humiliation; and the top of it is fixed as fast in heaven, in his ascension, exaltation, and intercession within the vail. And it is a way and a ladder for the inhabitants of the earth: the foot of it is not set in hell, for the fallen angels; no, there is a great and an unpassable gulph betwixt heaven and that place of separation from God: but the foot of it is set upon the earth, for the sons of men; and every man, young or old, who hears this everlasting gospel, is

invited, called, and warranted to come to God through Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." There is no cherubim or flaming sword to obstruct your access; but "the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come, and whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely."

2. THE Lord doth manifest and reveal himself to sinners in the days of their youth, as he is a God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

JACOB, in this vision which he had in his youth, saw a ladder, an emblem of Christ in his mediation; and he saw the Lord standing above it, proclaiming his covenant of promise, saying, "I am the God of Abraham thy father."

God is seen, in Christ, in his ineffable glory, in the glory of all his infinite perfections: he is the eternal, self-existent Being; he is JEHOVAH, and his glory he will not give to another. The glory of his infinite holiness and justice is seen in Christ, "whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

He is seen in Christ, as a reconciled God, well-pleased for his righteousness sake, Matth. iii. 17. "Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." God is well pleased with Christ, and with all those who are in Christ; and those who are in Christ, are well pleased with Christ, and well pleased with God, as he is in Christ: for God, as he is in Christ, is a reconciled

God; yea, he is "in Christ reconciling the world
"to himself;" willing, on Christ's account, to be re-
conciled to any man of the world whatsoever, who
hears this gospel; and "beseeching sinners to be
"reconciled to him" through Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19.
20. God is so well pleased with the satisfaction of
Christ, that he doth intreat and obtest sinners to be-
lieve his love and good-will to them, to stand no
more at a distance from him, but to take the benefit
of peace, of pardon, of grace and glory, for Christ's
sake; and, upon the account of what he hath done,
"who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin,
"that we might be made the righteousness of God
"in him."

God is seen in Christ as a promising God: Gen.
xxviii. 14. 15. "And in thy seed shall all the fa-
"milies of the earth be blessed: and, "Behold I
"am with thee, and will keep thee in all places
"whither thou goest." The divine presence is pro-
mised; preserving and persevering grace is promised;
the blessing is promised; and he commandeth the
blessing out of Zion, even life for evermore.

God, as he is in Christ, is a giving God: "The
"land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and
"to thy seed," Gen. xxviii. 13. The earthly Canaan
was a type and figure of heaven: the inheritance
of the saints in light is given of God, here in the
earnest of it, and hereafter in the full possession of it;
for he giveth grace and glory, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.; he
giveth the new heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.; the heart to
know the Lord, to love the name of the Lord, the
heart of flesh. In the first covenant, man was to
give something to God; in the new covenant, God
giveth all things to sinful men, in a way of free and

sovereign grace; he giveth them to inherit all things, and he will be to them a God: and he giveth to them the kingdom; "Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "dom."

God, as he is in Christ, is a forgiving God; he has proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." He is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and "not imputing their trespasses unto them;" because he "made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 19. 21. In Jesus, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Through him, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; and we receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in him. Through him, God has promised to "be merciful to our unrighteousness, and to remember our sins and iniquities no more." It is therefore a full and free indemnity, which God has published through Christ in the gospel.

AND God, as he is in Christ, is love, 1 John iv. 8. 16. God is not only loving, but he is love itself; and, by the exercise of faith, you are to believe, realize, and be persuaded of his love to your souls through Jesus Christ, and for his sake alone, 1 John iv. 16. 9. "And we have known, and believed the love that God hath to us; God is love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and sent his only-begotten Son into the world, "that we might live through him."

AND God is known and revealed in Christ, as our own God; "God, even our God, shall bless us:" and "he that is our God, is the God of salvation." Have you seen God as he is in Christ? You can have no saving, nor any comfortable discovery of God to your sinful souls, but as he is in Christ: out of Christ he is a consuming fire. God is only known and revealed in Christ as love, as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity: and if you have not seen him, as he is in Christ, standing above Jacob's ladder, you have never yet known God, nor seen him as he is.

3. God doth frequently manifest and reveal to sinners, in the days of their youth, his holy covenant of promise. Jacob, in his youth, saw this ladder, an emblem of Christ, and J E H O V A H standing above the ladder, proclaiming his covenant of promise, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac;" and "I will be with thee, and will keep thee." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he sheweth them his covenant: he sheweth the freedom, the excellency, and the stability of his covenant; and sheweth them the great and glorious blessings and privileges that are in his covenant.

He sheweth them that God himself is in the covenant: thus he said to Jacob, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: I will be with thee, and will keep thee." And this is the great promise of the covenant, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," Zech. xiii. 9. "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." God has made over himself to you in the covenant, as your God in Christ's right; and as your God in a way of promise, to be believed and relied on through

Christ ; as your God in a way of grace, and not in a way of merit, or in a way of works. Beware then that you reject not the counsel of God against your own souls.

CHRIST is seen to be in the covenant, as the Mediator of the covenant, and as the Testator of the covenant ; as the contracting party upon man's side in the covenant ; and as having fulfilled the condition of the covenant in his everlasting righteousness ; as having purchased all the blessings of the covenant ; and as dispensing all the grace of the covenant to needy destitute sinners of Adam's house.

THE Holy Spirit of promise is seen to be in the covenant, as thy Teacher, Comforter, and Sanctifier ; and you are to believe in the Holy Ghost, and trust him to quicken thee under thy deadness, and to enlighten thee under thy darkness ; and you are to depend upon him, to manifest the glory of Christ to your souls, and to bring the words of Christ to your remembrance, John xiv. 26. and xvi. 14.

The blessing is in the covenant, Gal. iii. 13. 14. " That the blessing of Abraham might come on the " Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." The blessing of a free-gifted righteousness is in the covenant ; the everlasting righteousness of Messiah the Prince, which reigneth to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord : the blessing of the pardon and remission of sins is in the covenant ; and the blessing of fellowship with God in his ordinances here, and in the immediate enjoyment of him in heaven hereafter.

THE presence of God to be with you, is in the covenant : thus he said to Jacob, " I will be with

"thee, and will keep thee." His presence to be with you, in prosperity and adversity, in life and at death; to be with you, to comfort you in all your tribulations; to support you under all your burdens; to direct you in all your straits; to guide you with his counsel while here, and at death to receive you to glory. The Lord's keeping and safe preservation is in the covenant, to keep thee from sin, from Satan's devices and temptations; to preserve thy soul; to preserve thy going out and coming in, Psal. cxxi.; to deliver thee from every evil work; and to preserve thee to his heavenly kingdom.

God's faithfulness, power, and mercy, is in the covenant, to secure the accomplishment of all he hath promised, Gen. xxviii. 15. "I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Heaven, and the kingdom that cannot be moved, is in the covenant of promise. Canaan was a type of heaven; and God said to Jacob, "The land on which thou liest will I give thee." And death, the passage to heaven, is in the covenant; "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23.

We proceed to apply the doctrine in an use of *Examination* and of *Exhortation*.

EXAMINATION.

1. THESE who have seen God as in Christ, and to whom JEHOVAH hath revealed his holy covenant of promise, they are such as, through Christ, have "believed in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might

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"be in God," 1 Pet. i. 21. They trust to the promise, and wait for the accomplishment of the promise, through many contrary-like appearances and trials of their faith, because they judge him faithful who hath promised; and they plead the promise in their dark hours, with the confidence of faith, Psal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

2. THESE who have seen God as he is in Christ, have avouched him for their God, Psal. xvi. 7. "O my soul, thou hast said to the Lord, thou art my Lord." They have joined themselves to the Lord, to love the name of the Lord, and to serve him. They have taken hold of God's covenant of promise, Is. lvi. 6. And as they account it a faithful saying, so they judge it worthy of all acceptance, "That Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom they are chief."

3. THEY cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Having seen him who is invisible, seen the glory of the invisible God in the person of Christ, they "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, Heb. xi. 25."

EXHORTATION.

We conclude this discourse, exhorting you to believe, and be persuaded of the promise of God, Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" in the accomplishment of them, "but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Believe the promise, as spoken to you, and trust to

it, as a ground of faith to thy soul: for it is a covenant of promise; and the promise is published to you, that it may be credited, believed, and trusted to by you. The great promise of the covenant is, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:" and this promise is given to you; for "there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." It is given to be received by your faith and trust in the mercy, love, grace, and faithfulness of God, brought near unto you in the promise, as the ground of thy faith and assured confidence. Nothing is more free than a promise; and the freedom of the covenant is a great encouragement to you to believe and trust to the covenant of promise. It is a covenant of grace, which was made for the unworthy and ill-deserving, and none else; and therefore, though unworthy, thou art warranted to trust to God's covenant of promise.

GEN. xxviii. 20. 21.

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me, — then shall the Lord be my God, Jer. iii. 4. 19. Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.

[The third discourse on this subject.]

IN these words we may notice, 1. What was Jacob's exercise in the days of his youth: he vowed a vow at Bethel, saying, "If God will be with me," or, as it may be read, seeing God will be with me, seeing God has promised to be with me,

and has revealed his covenant of promise unto me, has made over himself to me in the covenant as my God; therefore JEHOVAH "shall be my God." I trust to him, as a promising God, that he will be my God, through Christ Jesus; I depend on him as my God, and devote myself to his service, worship, and obedience: "Then the Lord shall be my God." This exercise of Jacob, in the days of his youth, is recorded, as a pattern worthy of your imitation, who are the rising generation.

2. In the other place of scripture, Jer. iii. 4. we have God's own warrant to take hold of his covenant of promise in the days of our youth. "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?"

3. In these words we have an encouraging promise of grace, to enable us to put in our claim to this wonderful relation, in which God is pleased to stand to us in the new covenant; "And I said, thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me."

From these words, we may deduce the following doctrinal observation.

"THAT as the time of youth is an especial season of taking hold of God's covenant of promise; so we ought to depend upon God's promised grace, to enable us to come personally into the bond of the covenant."

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by divine assistance,

I. To shew, that as God, in the covenant, stands in

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the relation of our God; so we ought, in the application of faith, to say, "The Lord shall be my God."

II. **SPEAK** a little of the import of these words, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?"

III. **OFFER** a few remarks concerning the encouraging promise of grace, to enable us to put in our claim to God, as standing in the relation of a Father in Christ Jesus unto us, who are fatherless, destitute sinners of Adam's house.

IV. **APPLY** the doctrine in a few inferences.

I. **WE** proceed to the first thing proposed, namely, To shew, that as God in the covenant stands in the relation of our God, so we ought, by the application of faith, to say, "The Lord shall be my God." And this head shall be considered in a few observations. And,

I. **WE** may notice and observe, that man, by the breach of the first covenant, forfeited all right and claim to the relation of God, as his God: but Christ, as the second Adam, in virtue of his fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, by his everlasting righteousness, acquired a new claim and title to this relation of God, as our God; hence it is said of him, as the new-covenant Head, Psal. lxxxix. 26. "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." Sin had made this world, which was like Eden, the garden of the Lord, to become like the valley of the son of Hinnom, a place of crying and howling; and it had been eternally so, if the Son of God had not appeared in our behalf, and become the contracting party on man's side in the covenant of grace: but behold, in

and has revealed his covenant of promise unto me, has made over himself to me in the covenant as my God; therefore JEHOVAH "shall be my God." I trust to him, as a promising God, that he will be my God, through Christ Jesus; I depend on him as my God, and devote myself to his service, worship, and obedience: "Then the Lord shall be my God." This exercise of Jacob, in the days of his youth, is recorded, as a pattern worthy of your imitation, who are the rising generation.

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this howling wilderness, a cry is heard from the new-covenant Head, as a public person, in the name of all his followers, "Thou art my God, the Rock of my salvation." And hence it is, that our Lord saith, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

2. We may observe, that the great and leading blessing of the new covenant, is the promise of a covenant-relation to God, as our God in Christ Jesus, Jer. xxxi. 33. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after these days, saith the Lord,—I will be their God, and they shall be my people." I will be their God; this is the soul's blessedness: an interest in God, as our God, is the summary of all happiness; it is heaven itself, and the very heart and first glory of heaven, Rev. xxi. 7. The Author of this relation is God himself; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." They shall be an accepted people, through Christ, the new-covenant Head, accepted through his righteousness; and they shall be my people, an holy and sanctified people, through the Spirit and grace of Christ, the Head of the redeemed from among men. The Author of this relation is God himself; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will be," speaks grace, and "they shall be," imports the same. And it being God's "I will be, and they shall be," it is infallibly sure, and lays the most solid foundation for faith and hope. The ground of this grant of grace, and the title to claim it, is God's covenant: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will be their God." The right shall be conveyed to them in the way of a covenant, the covenant made with Christ the second Adam, and representative of his seed, a covenant that stands fast in

his suretyship and satisfaction ; and upon the account of his doing and dying, " I will be their God : " upon the account of what Christ has done, which is the greatest of doings, the most noble and glorious that possibly can be done, I will do this ; I will do all I can do, all that a God can do for them, " I will be " their God." Man could do nothing for himself ; but " when we were without strength, in due time " Christ died for the ungodly." When man could do nothing, then God did do great things, the greatest things, things that angels and men shall eternally wonder at ; for he made over himself to man in the way of his covenant, that stands fast with Christ : " This is the covenant I will make with the house " of Israel, I will be their God, and they shall be my " people."

3. We observe that your privilege is great, in this, that God is your God through Christ Jesus, Deut. xxxiii. 29. 26. 27. " Happy art thou, O Israel, O " people, saved by the Lord : for there is none like " the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens " for thy help, and in his excellency on the sky ; the " eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the " everlasting arms." You are happy, for God is your God ; God the Father, is your Father to love you ; God the Son, is your Saviour to save you from your sins ; God the Holy Ghost is your Teacher, your Comforter, and Sanctifier. All God's perfections and attributes are yours ; his mercy is yours, to pardon you ; his wisdom yours, to direct you ; and his power is yours, to protect you ; his omniscience is yours to watch over you ; his holiness is yours, to sanctify you and make you holy ; and his goodness is yours, to bestow grace and glory, and all good things upon you ; his omnipresence is yours, to attend you, and solace you in all

places and conditions ; his eternity is the date of your happiness, and his faithfulness is your security, and insures the accomplishment of all he has promised in the covenant unto you ; his justice is yours, to punish your enemies ; and his all-sufficiency is yours, to make you completely happy. And his perfections, as made over to you in Christ, are a suitable remedy for all the evils which sin has brought upon thee ; his wisdom cures your ignorance, his grace your guilt, and his power your weakness ; his mercy is a remedy for your misery, his faithfulness for your inconstancy, and his holiness for your impurity ; and his fulness supplieth all your wants.

AND seeing God is your God, all his promises are yours, all his gifts and graces are yours, and all his creatures are yours ; his creatures on earth, are yours to sustain you ; his angels are yours, to guard you and to encamp about you ; this world is your sojourning place ; and his heavens are your country and inheritance.

AND he will be your God, not for days, months, or years, but every day, in every place, and in every condition ; for he said, " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will be your God in all the troubles you meet with, and will support you ; he will be your God at death, Psal. xlviii. 14. ; and when all earthly comforts fail you, he will not fail you. He will be your God after you are dead, Mat. xxii. 31. 32. That which was spoken to Moses at the bush, was spoken unto you by God, saying, " I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living : " for the dead in Christ do live unto him, and with him ; and therefore their bodies, which are rotting in the grave, shall rise again ; for

he is the God of the whole man, and the body is a part of the man. And he will be your God for ever in heaven, Rev. xxi. 4. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Happy art thou then, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord!

4. WE observe, that you are not only warranted in a way of faith, to apply this great promise of the covenant to yourself, but grace is promised to enable you, in a way of believing, to say, "The Lord is my God." Thus Jacob, in the exercise of faith, says in the text, "The Lord shall be my God:" and this language of faith has been the dialect of the church in all ages, Psal. xci. 2. "I will say of the Lord, He is my Refuge; my God, and in him I will trust." The Lord saith in the promise, "I will be thy God"; and faith, in applying the promise, saith, "The Lord shall be my God: I will say of the Lord, he is my God." I will say in a way of faith and believing, what God has said in a way of promise; for the promise is given to be trusted to, to be credited and believed: every one that reads the promise, is warranted to believe the promise with application; for the promise is spoken to you by God, as much as it was spoken to Judah, Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The Lord saith, "I will be thy God," for Christ's sake; and do you therefore say, with assured confidence, "The Lord shall be my God," for Christ's sake. The grace of the Holy Spirit is promised to you, to enable you to say it, Zech. xiii. 9. "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." I will say, "It is my people," through Jesus Christ, and his righteousness and satisfaction; and they shall say, "The Lord is my God," through Jesus Christ, and his righteousness and satisfaction. God cannot be

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the God of a sinner, such as you are, otherwise than through Christ; and he will be the God of every sinner that puts in his claim to him through Christ, and in his right. Are you pleased with the great grant and promise of the covenant, "God for your God?" and have your eyes been opened, to see Christ in the glory of his person? and has your heart been made to acquiesce in the tenor of the covenant, the holding of grace, and through the righteousness of Jesus? Then thou hast said it, "The Lord is my God." And you may know, for your comfort, "That this God is your God for ever, and will be your Guide even unto death."

God giveth himself to you, in the promise, for your God. Christ is a Prophet, to reveal God to you; he is a Priest, to bring you to God; and a King, to keep you with God: and therefore trust to him, and depend upon him, as the Mediator betwixt God and you. And God is willing to be your God; and this is the season of mercy, to obtain God for your God: and I can tell you, as certainly as God is in heaven, if you do not take him for your God, you shall repent it to all eternity.

BUT can you not say, that, in some measure, this is your exercise, through grace, to make choice of God for your God, Psal. xvi. 2. and to give yourselves to the Lord, 1 Cor. viii. 4.? And are you not well pleased with the contrivance of salvation, because it is so much calculated for debasing self, and exalting free grace?

AND seeing God giveth himself to you through Christ, it is just your great business, in the strength

of grace, to accept of God in Christ for your chief end, to aim at his glory in all you do, 1 Cor. x. 31. ; and to accept of him as your chief happiness, the rest of your souls, and the delight of your hearts, Psal. cxvi. 7. ; to take his will and law for your rule, and to accept of him in Christ, for your portion and up-making all, Lam. iii. 24. And you are to devote yourselves to him, to be accepted in the beloved; present yourselves in soul and body a living sacrifice, acceptable through Christ, the gospel-altar, If. lvi. 7. You are to live to him who died for you, and rose again; you are to obey what he commands, in his strength; and you are to be ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence: you are to give all you have to him; your soul, with all its faculties and powers; your body, with all its members; your understanding, to know him, and to think upon him; your will, to chuse him; your heart, to love him; your eyes, to read his word, and behold his works; and your lips, to pray to him, to bless and to praise him. For you are not your own, but bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are God's. Account not your life dear to you, if he call you to witness for him, even to resisting unto blood; but let it be your concern in all things to lift up the burden of his praise; for you are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that you might shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

II. WE proceed to speak a little of what is imported in these words of the text, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth? And,

1. THESE words do import, that a call and invi-

tation is directed from God, to you who are the rising generation, to take hold of his covenant of promise: and thus saith the Lord to you, and to every one of you in particular, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" This is a message to you from God; and the word of exhortation speaketh unto you as unto children.

2. It importeth, that every one of you in particular must personally take hold of the covenant. The faith of your parents will not save you, nor give you an interest in the covenant, unless you yourself believe on the Son of God. "Wilt thou not," in particular, and by name and surname, "cry unto me, My Father?"

3. It importeth, that God publisheth an indemnity and an act of grace, and is willing to pass by all your former refusals of Christ, whether you are young or old: "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Whatever you have done in former times, behold now, even yet, is the accepted time, the day of salvation! "To day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."

4. It importeth, that it is most acceptable to God, that you, in particular, take hold of his covenant, and call him Father in Christ's right, and in Christ's name, and by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. You may speak it, yea, cry it to God himself; and it will be melody sounding sweetly in the court of heaven, and before a throne of grace: "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?"

5. It importeth, that the Lord himself answereth all your objections against calling him My Father. There can be no reason against it, but your own unbelief; that you will not call him My Father; "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Your first father Adam died, the head of the first covenant died, and left you and all his other children fatherless; but the Lord speaketh an encouraging word to you in the new covenant; a call is directed to you who are fatherless, from him in whom the fatherless do find mercy; "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?" Here he declares, that he is willing to stand in the relation of a Father in Christ unto you, and directs you to lay claim to him in the relation of a Father: and though you should object, that your trespasses are grown up unto the heavens, and your sins are more than the hairs of your head; yet he saith, as appears from the context, "Though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord. Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?"

6. It importeth, that the grounds of faith laid down in the word, are stable and solid; so that the chief of sinners, who hear this everlasting gospel, may venture their souls salvation upon them, with an assured confidence of faith; so that they may not only say it, and whisper it with a soft voice, but they may cry it with a full breath, in the hearing of angels and men, to the glory of God in their salvation, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, 'Thou art my Father?'" Faith, when it is planted in the soul, and drawn forth into exercise, with a sight of its object, it is exerted with the greatest freedom,

and with the complacency of the whole soul ; for, according to the strength of faith, the cry and acclamation is raised, and doth ring and echo through the whole man, "Thou art my God, the Rock of my salvation." And faith, where it is, doth not only realize its object, but believeth with a particular application to the man himself, saying, My Father. "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father?"

7. It doth import, that youth doth need a guide. "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?" Young men need a guide in their way, how to cleanse their way, Psal. cxix. 9. "By what means shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word." The way of your heart is a polluted way ; and you would acknowledge it to be such, if you knew the plague of your own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. Had you a spiritual and humbling discovery of the Atheism, self-conceit, self-righteousness, enmity, earthly-mindedness, vanity and blasphemy, with which your hearts are defiled ; and that your hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; you would be persuaded that you infinitely need it, that God, by his word and Spirit, should cleanse this way of your heart. You need to have the way of your worship cleansed, to be guided of God, to worship him in spirit and in truth ; to have the way of your walk and conversation cleansed, that your corruptions may be mortified, and you may be kept from youthful lusts which war against the soul ; and that you may have your "conversation in heaven, from which we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Youth is

obnoxious to many temptations, especially in this sinful and corrupt day wherein we live; and you need to have God for the Guide of your youth, that you be not led into temptation, but delivered from all evil. And though you be young, yet your dying-day may be at the door, and a journey just before you, through the dark mountains, through the dark valley and shadow of death. You therefore greatly need to have this God for your God for ever and ever, and to be your Guide even unto death; and through death, till he bring you to that land, where the inhabitant shall not say I am sick, and the people thereof are forgiven their iniquity.

8. It importeth, that young men may have God for the Guide of their youth, and may lay claim to him in that relation; "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth?" Nothing doth dishonour him more, nothing doth offend him more, than that you do not in particular, and for yourselves, put in your claim for his standing in that relation to you, of a Father, and of the Guide of your youth. Can you have a better father than God? and can you have a better guide, than a father, for the guide of your youth? Your heavenly Father has infinite wisdom, and he is a God of infinite power, and his love to you is an infinite love; and are you not in a safe custody, by his infinite power, and under a safe conduct, by infinite wisdom and love?

YOUNG men, it is the voice of God to you, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." The Psalmist said it, and do you say it likewise, through

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grace; "O God, thou art my trust from my youth,"
Psal. lxxi. 4. 5.

DEPEND ON God in Christ; for teaching, Psal. lxxi. 14. "I have been taught by thee from my youth, and hitherto I have declared thy works." O how refreshing and instructing are the lessons he has taught his people in their youth! By one such lesson you will know more of God, than by hearing and reading; all the days of your life: to hear and to read are means of his institution, but they are ineffectual without the teaching of his Spirit. By his teaching, you will be enabled to declare his wonders; his wonders in the works of nature, in the works of creation and providence; the wonders of his grace, and of his love; the wonders of his mercy and goodness to your souls: "Come hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

AND his teaching will be effectual to bring you to Christ, and to preserve you in Christ Jesus; for every one that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh to the Son: and it will fit you to bear his yoke in your youth, his yoke of obedience, and his yoke of suffering, as he sees meet to call you to it, Lam. iii. 27. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."

III. WE now proceed to offer a few remarks concerning the encouraging promise of grace, to enable us to put in our claim to God, as standing in the relation of a Father in Christ unto us, who are fatherless, destitute sinners of Adam's house. And,

1. WE remark, that adoption, and the privilege of Sonship, is one of the blessings of the new cove-

nant: In the first covenant, Adam was the son of God by creation; but in the new covenant, we become the sons of God by regeneration, by adoption, and by faith in Christ Jesus. The eternal Son of God is become the Son of man, by his incarnation; and through him, as the new-covenant Head, the Head of the redeemed from among men, we have communion with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as our God and Father, in his title and right. And may we not, in a transport of holy wonder, cry out with the apostle, 1 John iii. 1. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" The Spirit of adoption, crying, "Abba Father," is one of the blessings of this covenant of promise. And it is an article of this new covenant, that the prodigal son shall see and be convinced of his lost estate in the first covenant; that his first father Adam died, and left his children fatherless; that we all sinned and died in him, as a public person, and are therefore, considered in ourselves, both destitute and without hope in the world, Psal. xlv. 10. "O daughter, hearken, and incline thine ear; forget thy father's house, and thine own people." Thy father's house, the first Adam's family, is a broken house; there is neither food nor clothing in it, nor any sanctuary in it, to protect perishing sinful souls from the vindictive wrath of God: but in Christ's Father's house there are many mansions, and a table is covered in it, to satiate every weary soul, and to replenish every sorrowful soul.

2. We remark, that there is an almighty efficacy in the grace of God, conveyed to the souls of men, through the promise of the new-covenant; "Thou shalt call me, My Father." Though God reveals

himself as a Father in Christ, yet not one soul would ever have cried to him, "Thou art my Father," had not the Lord pledged his faithfulness for it in the promise; "I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father." I, who am JEHOVAH, have said it; and what I have said, shall be accomplished: I said it, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," when nothing but darkness covered the face of the deep: I have said it, and therefore the unbelief and enmity of thy heart, and all the snares of the world, and temptations of Satan combined against thy soul, shall not be able to gainsay it: I have said it in a way of promise, and therefore thou shalt say it in a way of faith and believing, "Thou art my Father, thou art the Guide of my youth:" thou shalt say, "Thou art my Father;" and shalt say it with the greatest freedom of choice and election, and with the truest kind of liberty; and with a jubilee running through thy whole soul, thou shalt cry unto me, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation."

3. WE may remark, that it is by the Spirit of the Son, and in the right of the Son of God, the first-born from among many brethren, that we can only say unto God, "Thou art my Father, thou art the Guide of my youth, Gal. iv. 6.

4. WE remark, that it is for the glory of God that we call him, "My Father," in Christ's name, and in his right and title. God did never put any thing in a promise, but it was for his own honour and glory; and he has promised it, thou shalt call me, "My Father." But perhaps some may say, Is this promise directed to me? and is it for the glory of God, that I in particular call him, "My Father?" Yes, it is. The promise is absolute, without any



condition or limitation; and it is directed to all who hear this everlasting gospel, and therefore it is directed to you, as well as to others. Your having a Bible put into your hands, wherein this word of grace is recorded, is a full warrant to you to believe it, and apply it to yourselves. It is a word of grace directed to lost sinners, to those that are fatherless; and you cannot deny that you are one of that sort and kind. It is then the will of God that you call him, "My Father," in the name of Christ; for it is his will, that his promise be believed, and trusted unto. Nothing will please him so well as that you call him, "My Father," in Christ Jesus; and that you flee into the embraces of his love, through the Son of his love, Matth. iii. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." God is well pleased with Christ, and with all those that are in Christ; and these who are in Christ, are well pleased with Christ, and they are well pleased with God, as he is in Christ: for God, as he is in Christ, is a reconciled God, and a merciful Father, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and he "rests in his love."

5. We remark, that we may depend upon the promise of God for grace, to enable us to call him, "My Father." The promise looketh to you that cannot call him, "My Father." "Thou shalt call me, My Father." And it is one of the true sayings of God, of him whose name is faithful and true; thus saith the Lord, "Thou shalt call me, My Father." It is not from any good disposition in you, but from grace and love in me; and it is not from any power and ability in you, but from my faithfulness in the promise, and from my almighty power to accomplish it, that "thou shalt call me, My Father." And heaven itself, as it were, is wrapt up in this promise.

"Thou shalt call me, My Father;" that is, thou shalt know me to be JEHOVAH, to be a God in Christ, and shalt call me Father; thou shalt know my name as it is in Christ, know my mercy, my love, and grace in Christ Jesus; and thou shalt chuse me for thy God and Portion, and call me, "My Father;" thou shalt trust in me for grace and glory, for the upper and nether springs, and call me, "My Father;" thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, honour and serve me with reverence and godly fear, and call me, "My Father;" and thy heart shall be circumcised to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart; and thou shalt be enabled to depend upon me for every thing thou dost need, from the shoe's latchet to the great salvation; and to come to me daily with all thy wants and complaints, as a child to his father, able and ready to help him; for, "thou shalt call me, "My Father, and shalt not depart from me:" but thou shalt live and die about my hand: and, waiting thus on the Lord, "thou shalt renew thy strength, "and mount up with wings as eagles; thou shalt "walk, and not weary, and thou shalt run, and not "faint."

IV. WE now proceed to make some application of this doctrine, and that in an use of *Examination* and *Exhortation*.

EXAMINATION.

I. THESE who have taken hold of God's covenant of promise, have seen themselves to be in a sinful and miserable state, by the breach of the first covenant: you have seen that the variance betwixt God and you is very great, and that the quarrel is running very high: you have been made to approve of, and rely upon God's method of salvation; accounting it a

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom you are chief: you have renounced all other confidences, and you depend upon the mediation of the Lord Jesus, in all your approaches to God; and you have a daily correspondence with him, as appearing in the presence of God for us, coming to him with all your wants, to be supplied, with all your plagues, to be healed, and with all your sins, to be pardoned.

2. You will have a deliberate complacency in the covenant of promise. As we show ourselves the children of the first Adam, by the natural bent to the covenant of works; so the believing soul has a liking and relish of the new covenant proposed in the gospel, and faith of it, "It is all my salvation, and all my desire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

3. How do you please the way of holding in this covenant, an holding of grace, and holding upon what Christ has done? Doth the grant and disposition of the new covenant please you well, so that you delight to hold all in the Redeemer's right, and to cry through him, "Thou art my Father, the Rock of my salvation?" How stand you affected to the new-covenant Head? Do you glory in him only? Is. xlv. last. And do you rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh? Phil. iii. 3. And do your hearts sometimes burn with love to an unseen Saviour? And is he to you the "Plant of renown, the Pearl of great price, and more excellent than all the mountains of prey?" And do you look upon yourselves as bankrupt creatures? And are you well-pleased that he has all your stock in his hand, and that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge? for "they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, and all the vessels of greater and smaller quantity." The great end and design of the new covenant, which is to glorify God, to honour Christ, and to abase self, is relished with complacency by all the spiritual seed of Abraham; they see grace in it, mercy in it, wisdom and love in it, and heaven dawning in it; there is nothing in this covenant they would have out of it, and there is nothing out of the covenant they would have in it, and they rejoice in it, "as well ordered in all things and sure."

4. THE righteousness of Christ, the new-covenant Head, will be the only ground of your confidence, Phil. iii. 7. 8.; you will desire to be found in him, having that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ; and this you will rejoice and glory in, that his name is, "The Lord our righteousness." The eternal Son of God, in the covenant, consented to become man, and to be the federal Head and Representative of an elect world, Is. xlii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 19. The breach between God and man was greater than to be done away by one travelling between parties at variance, to reconcile them with bare words: there could be no covenant of peace betwixt God and sinners, without reparation of damages done to the honour of God through sin, and without honouring the law by an exact obedience; and the Son of God said, "Lo! I come," Psal. xl. 7.; I put myself in their room and law-place, as the second Adam, to do both these, in the obedience of my life, and in the sufferings of my death. And let us here adore the condescension of the Son of God in becoming man, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief! Thus he condescended to be brought into the rank and or-

der of creatures, who is "over all God, blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. He condescended to come into the rank of inferior creatures, to take the nature of man, and not the nature of the angels, Heb. ii. 16. And he assumed the human nature after it was blasted by sin, and withered with the curse; for he took on him "the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3; so that, though he was not a sinner, yet he looked like one. And, by this assumption, and his incarnation, his Deity was veiled, and his glory eclipsed, Phil. ii. 6. 7.; for he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, that he might glorify God upon the earth, and that in his righteousness we might be exalted.

AND the eternal Son of God condescended to be the federal Head and Representative of an elect world, to transact in their name, Is. xlii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 47. The holy One of God represented wretched sinners; the Beloved of the Father represented the sinful company. And hence the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to his people represented by him, in its effects only, (which is no proper imputation at all), so as their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are therefore accepted, as their evangelical righteousness, on which they are justified; but Christ's righteousness is imputed to them in itself, even as Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity: for Christ obeyed and suffered as a public person, in the room and law-*stead* of his people represented by him; even as Adam sinned as a public person, and his posterity sinned in him, and fell with him, Rom. v. 12. 19. and viii. 3.; and hence the covenant of grace is absolute, and not conditional to us; for, it being made with Christ as Representative, the condition of it was laid upon him, and fulfilled by him, in his everlasting righteousness.

EXHORTATION.

WE now proceed to an use of Exhortation. And we solemnly exhort you, whether young or old, and that in the name of the eternal God, and in the name of his Son Christ Jesus our Lord, that you, and every one of you that shall read these lines, do personally, and for yourselves, embrace and take hold of God's covenant of promise. Take hold of it as left to you : for there is a promise left you of entering into God's rest ; beware lest you come short of it, Heb. iv. 1. And the promise is given to you and to your children, to be believed and trusted to, and applied by you, Acts ii. 39. 40. And this will be your condemnation, if you reject the counsel of God against your own souls.

WHEN the soul gets a saving discovery of God, as he is in Christ, it is not one blessing that attends it, but a multitude of blessings, even all the sure mercies of David : " Acquaint thyself now with God, and " be at peace with him, and thereby good shall come " unto thee." You cannot know God until you see him in Christ ; and, since God is in Christ, you may now, without delay, acquaint yourself with God : and if once you are acquainted with God, and know him, and see him as he is in Christ, you cannot but be at peace with him ; for you will see him as he is in Christ, " reconciling the world unto himself ;" you will see him to be love, 1 John iv. 10. And, seeing him to be love, you will love him, who first loved you ; and, loving him, you will be at peace with him, who is " the God of peace, who brought again " from the dead the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd " of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant." And the first sight you see of God, as he is in Christ, will draw your heart unto him with cords of love ; and that day will be the day of the first visit of the day-spring from on high to thy soul ; the day

of thy espousals unto Christ, and of thy conversion unto God. And this will be the day of God's working in thy heart the work of faith with power, and of his betrothing thee unto himself for ever, in faithfulness, and in righteousness, in loving-kindness, and in tender mercies.

If the question be moved, What is it to take hold of the covenant of promise? We answer, That the way to take hold of the covenant, or the way to enter personally into the covenant of grace, is to unite to Christ the new-covenant Head by faith. And may a day of the Mediator's power accompany any small endeavours that are made, to speak of the mystery of faith, in the believing application of the promise of God's covenant! It will be matter of the most mournful lamentation, if the ark of the covenant be opened unto you in the gospel, and not one shelterless soul of Adam's family flee into it for refuge.

It is only under the influence of the Holy Spirit that you can personally come into the covenant, If. xlv. 4. and xlv. 24. And you come personally into the covenant made with Christ, the second Adam, by the following steps: 1. Through the grace of the Divine Spirit, you are to be convinced of it, to see and believe that you are lost, ruined, and undone in Adam, by his breaking the first covenant, as a federal head and a public person, Rom. v. 12. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 22. And, 2. That by nature you are wholly corrupted, averse to good, and prone to evil, Gen. vi. 5. 3. That by nature you are under the curse of the broken law, and bound over to the revenging wrath of God, Gal. iii. 10. 4. That you are utterly unable to help yourselves out of this gulph of sin and mi-

tery into which you are plunged, Ezek. xvi. 4. 5. 6. 5. Believe that there is a covenant of grace, for the relief of lost sinners, established between God essentially considered, and the Lord Jesus, as the Head of the redeemed from among men; or, between the Father, as representing the Deity; and his eternal Son, as the second Adam, wherein the Lord Jesus undertook to fulfil all righteousness as a public person, and the Father contracted to bestow all blessings upon that account; and that this covenant of grace is a free and an absolute covenant, and not conditional as to you; for, the covenant being made with Christ as Representative, the conditions of the covenant were laid upon him, and fulfilled by him, in and by his holy birth, his righteous life, and satisfactory death, Psal. lxxxix. throughout. 6. Believe that the covenant of grace, fulfilled in the condition of it by Christ, the new-covenant Head, and certainly to be fulfilled in its promise, is, in Christ crucified, really offered to you in particular in the gospel; and that you are called to the fellowship of it in him: for, "To you is the word of this salvation sent;" and, "The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. 39. and xiii. 26. 7. Believe on the name of Christ crucified, offered, and exhibited to you in particular, as the Lord our righteousness, as the great High Priest of our profession, ordained for men, and who hath made reconciliation for the sins of the people, and is the end of the law for righteousness. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in his name, shall receive the remission of sins." 8. Believe in him, and devote yourselves unto him, and worship him, as the King of Zion, and Governor among the nations. Hearken unto him as your Prophet; and, in his strength, re-

sign yourselves in soul and body, and all you have, unto him, to be taught by his word and Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence; to be his disciple and spouse, his servant and follower, *If. xlv. 4. 5.*; and, through his grace, renounce all other lords and lovers, *Hos. xiv. 4. 5. 8.*; and pass yourselves into the Redeemer's right, to be rescued from sin and Satan, from the present evil world, and from death, hell, and the grave. You may trust in him, as King in Zion for sanctification; for he is an heart-conquering and a sin-subduing Lord: "He will subdue our iniquities, and will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea," *Mic. vii. 19. 9.* Through Christ, believe in God, as thy God and Father, in his title and right, *Psal. lxxxix. 26.* "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." And believe in, and depend upon the Holy Ghost, as thy Sanctifier, Comforter, Teacher, and Remembrancer, *1 Cor. vi. 19. John xiv. 26. and xv. 26. 27.*

"To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The word of exhortation speaketh unto you as unto children; "My son, give me thy heart. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon.—Also the son of the stranger that taketh hold of my covenant, and joineth himself to the Lord, to love the name of the Lord; him will I bring to my holy mountain, and your burnt-offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar," *If. lvi. 6.*

(1.) CONSIDER, that it has been the practice of all the saints, in all ages, to come personally into the bond of the covenant. Thomas saith, "Thou art my Lord, and my God; and the church doth put in

her claim to the covenant-relation, "The Lord is
 "my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in
 "him," Lam. iii. 24. See also Psal. xvi. 2. and
 lxxiii. 25. 27. (2.) Consider it is a business no other
 person can do for you, if, by grace, you do not per-
 sonally come into the bond of the covenant for your-
 self. The parent cannot do it for the child, nor the
 husband for the wife, Jer. ix. 25. Mat. viii. 11. 12.
 Amos ix. 7. (3.) The call to come into the bond of
 the covenant is personal, directed to every man who
 hears the gospel; "Unto you I call, O men," Prov.
 viii. 4. And the answer of faith to the call must
 therefore be personal; "When thou saidst, Seek ye
 "my face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.
 "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteous-
 "ness and strength," Psal. xxvii. 8. Is. xlv. 23. and
 xlv. 4. (4.) Consider, this is the season of coming
 personally into the bond of the covenant; it is the
 season of youth with some of you, and "it is good to
 "bear his yoke in your youth." The Lord appeared
 to Solomon, at Gibeon, in his youth; and Obadiah
 feared the Lord from his youth. It is the voice of
 the Son of God to you, "I love them that love me,
 "and those that seek me early, shall find me," Prov.
 viii. 17. It is a time of backsliding and defection
 with us all, for we have forsaken the Lord God of
 our fathers; and therefore it is a season wherein we
 ought to say, "I will go and return to my first
 "husband; for then was it better with me than
 "now: and it is encouraging for us to return, that
 "the Lord, the God of Israel, hateth putting away."
 And it is a time of threatened judgments, and there-
 fore a proper season for taking hold of God's cove-
 nant; for when the decree bringeth forth, and the
 day of the Lord's controversy approacheth, there
 will be no safety but in the ark of the covenant.

As for directions, I shall only say, 1. That you

are to take hold of the covenant of promise, in an humble and confident dependence upon the grace and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, without whom you can do nothing; depending upon a promising God, and upon the Holy Spirit of promise, *Is. xliv. 5. and xlv. 24. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. John xv. 4. 5. and i. 16. 2.* You are to take hold of it cordially; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" and *Psal. xvi. 2.* the Psalmist saith, "O my soul, thou hast said unto *JEHOVAH*, Thou art my Lord." 3. You are to take hold of the covenant with judgment and solid consideration, and not by a mere flash of affection, *Hos. ii. 19.* "I will betrothe thee unto me in judgment." And 4. You are to take hold of the covenant speedily, and without delay; for the Master is come, and calleth for you; and blessed are you who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. It is the voice of God to you this very day; "I will say, "It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," *Zech. xiii. 9.* And though you find not that enlargement which you would wish to attain unto; yet, if your doubting and averfeness be your burden, as they are your sin, do you essay and endeavour to say it in the strength of grace, though it should be with stammering lips, "The Lord is my God:" For this was Jacob's language at Bethel, in the day of his youth, and in the day of his distress, when he fled from the face of Esau his brother, "The Lord shall be my God."

I shall conclude with recommending it to you, to meditate frequently upon the betrothing love of Christ, and upon the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem.

1. MEDITATE frequently upon the betrothing love of Christ. God, in the new covenant, has reveal-

ed himself as a betrothing God. The Son of God has betrothed and married our nature to himself in a personal and hypostatical union, and we may therefore, with confidence, venture upon his grace and goodwill toward men: and the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to betrothe sinners of Adam's house to himself in a way of free and sovereign grace, Hos. ii. 19. 20. "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The Lord Jesus Christ has taken his betrothing love, and wrapped it up in a covenant of promise; and he has indorsed or directed the promise to sinners, that the sinful sons of men may trust it, and that none may fear that they are excluded from a warrant to trust to, and venture upon the grace and love of Christ.

THE persons betrothed are sinners of Adam's house; the glorious infinite person betrothing, is the great God our Saviour: and it is a most comfortable and blessed betrothing betwixt sinners and a Saviour; betwixt dead sinners, and him who is the resurrection and the life; betwixt blind benighted souls, and him who is the light of the world, the light of the upper paradise, and the day-spring from on high; betwixt diseased, polluted sinners, and him who is the Lord that healeth us, even Jesus, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and betwixt guilty bankrupt sinners, and him who is JEHOVAH our righteousness, in whom God is to be found, as reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Hearken therefore, and consider it, ye children of men; forget your father's house, the house of the first Adam; and forgoe all hold of the first covenant, (for that covenant being broken, the whole

family is undone and ruined), and come and be espoused to the Lord Jesus, the new-covenant Head, the betrothing Head of the redeemed from among men; "So shall the King greatly desire your beauty," Psal. xlv. 10.

CONSIDER, that the betrothing Head of the redeemed is fair, and altogether lovely, Psal. xlv. 1. Song v. 10. 16.; his riches are unsearchable riches of grace and of glory, Eph. iii. 8. Consider his dying love, that he was slain, that he might redeem you to God by his blood, and that he might redeem you from this present evil world, and redeem you from all iniquity, Rev. v. 9. Gal. i. 3. 4. Tit. ii. 14. He is the Judge of the quick and the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the first-begotten of the dead, who is willing to betrothe dying clay to himself, that he may give you a glorious immortality with himself; that when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye may also appear with him in glory.

LIFT up your heads then, O ye everlasting doors of the souls of men, by an hearty Amen of faith to the promise of Christ, "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever;" and thus the King of glory doth, and shall come in, and sup with you, and ye with him, Psal. xxiv. 6. Rev. iii. 20.

2. MEDITATE frequently upon the decease which the Lord of glory accomplished at Jerusalem, Luke ix. 30. 31. "And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

IT is necessary in your meditating upon the decease the Lord of glory accomplished at Jerusalem, that you be under the influence of the Spirit of glory. Moses

and Elias appeared in glory, and talked of his decease; they had a noon-tide of the light of glory, of the Spirit of glory upon them; and unless a twilight-glimpse of that glory beam in upon your hearts, you will neither think nor talk to purpose of the decease he accomplished at Jerusalem.

It is the highest and most sublime subject of the regions of glory, to think and talk of the decease he accomplished at Jerusalem: there will be use of speech in heaven, and there will be a voice of tongues about the throne: and their talk will be of the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem.

His decease was his death, his exit or departure. The departure of Israel out of Egypt to Canaan, is called their *Exit* or *Exodus*, the same word used here: and his decease was like their departure, accompanied by a bloody attack upon him by all the hosts of hell; and he went through a Red-sea of suffering, and of vindictive wrath, making peace by the blood of his cross. His decease was the subject of discourse upon mount Tabor; a subject that was most delightful to our Lord himself, and most refreshing to Moses and Elias: though they had come down locally from the place of heaven, yet their bliss and beatitude was the very same; for they had the presence of Christ; and, appearing in glory, they talked of his decease, which was the great theme of the inhabitants of the upper house, and it was the fountain and spring of all their glory and felicity. The highest stile of language in heaven, is the decease our Lord accomplished at Jerusalem. We have no nice elaborate discourse that Moses and Elias made upon the mount: no; it was, in a few words, massy, lofty, and sublime, "The decease he should accomplish at Jerusalem!" It was the burden of the song of the redeemed; they brought this high-

est note down with them to the earth : for when angels and saints about the throne have enlarged their thoughts and contemplations, and bended their faculties to the uttermost, and soared as high as their weak heads can allow them, they are just obliged to issue their song where they began ; “ O mysterious, ineffable, and divine, is that mystery of godliness, God “ manifested in the flesh, accomplishing his decease at “ Jerusalem !” The glory of heaven just centres in the death he accomplished at Jerusalem : we do not hear of another word from Moses and Elias, when they appeared in glory upon mount Tabor, but that they talked of the “ decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem !”

You are to meditate upon the glory of the person of Christ, who accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. He is Lord of all, the Lord of glory : “ If the princes of this world had known it, they would not “ have crucified the Lord of glory.” He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Prince of life ; “ But “ ye killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised “ from the dead,” Acts iii. 15. He is the King of glory, “ the God of glory, who appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in “ in Charran.” He is JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who spake to Moses, Exod. iii. from the burning-bush at Horeb. And his name is, “ Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty “ God, the everlasting Father,” Is. ix. 6. ; and yet his name is called JESUS, because “ he saveth his people “ from their sins.”

You are to meditate upon the grounds and reasons of the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem. It was for the glory of God in man's salvation, John xvii. 3. 4. It was for the glory of the holiness, majesty, and justice of God ; of the grace, mercy, and

love of God: it was to "finish the transgression, to
 "make an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting right-
 "eousness, and to make reconciliation for iniquity;"
 and it was because of his love to men, and for the sal-
 vation of the souls of men, Rev. i. 5. Eph. 5. 1.

You are to meditate upon the nature and quality
 of his death and decease which he accomplished at Je-
 rusalem. He accomplished his decease in a public
 capacity; he took our nature into an intimate and
 personal union with himself, 1 Tim. iii. 16. John i.
 14.; he substitute himself in our room and law-place;
 and he suffered as a public person, "bearing our sins
 "in his own body on the tree, and giving his life a
 "ransom for many." His death and decease was
 early spoken of, and promised, Gen. iii. 15.; it was
 testified of by all the prophets, and it was expected
 and looked for by all the Old-Testament saints, and
 seen by them afar off. In his decease he did bear our
 griefs, our sins, our shame, and our sorrows. It was
 an ignominious and a cursed death, and yet a trium-
 phant and a victorious death; for he "spoiled princi-
 "palities and powers, and made a shew of them open-
 "ly on the cross, triumphing over them in it." His
 death, it was a necessary death; "Ought not Christ to
 "have suffered these things, and to enter into his glo-
 "ry?" And it was an acceptable and a favourable
 death; "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and
 "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to
 "God for a sweet-smelling favour," Eph. v. 2.

You are to meditate upon the pleasant fruits and
 effects of the decease which he accomplished at Jeru-
 salem. He has reconciled us to God by his death,
 and we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all
 by the blood of Jesus. The Lamb slain has opened
 the seven seals; he has opened the gates of paradise,
 the fountain of life, and the treasures of grace; he

has opened up and revealed the counsels and purposes of God's love that were hid in a mystery; and he has opened the understandings of men, to see the wonders of his grace, mercy and love, in the covenant of promise. He was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood; he hath glorified God upon the earth, and finished the work he gave him to do; "he said, It is finished, and bowed his head, and "gave up the ghost." It was the purpose of the wisdom and love of God, to gather his greatest revenue of glory from the salvation of sinners of Adam's family, that deserved to be in hell; and what a wonderful thought and meditation is it, that the cross and death of the Lord of glory, should be the great mean of the glory of God in man's salvation! The most wonderful sight in heaven is, "The Lamb "in the midst of the throne, as it were slain;" and the greatest homage and worship God ever received, was in Golgotha, when Christ, though a Son, learned obedience, and humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross!

AND you are to meditate upon that holy joy, that willingness and chearfulness, with which he accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. This was the subject with which he entertained Moses and Elias in mount Tabor. He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men. He said, "Lo, I come, a body hast thou prepared me;" that is, *an human nature*, to obey in, to suffer, and to die in, for the remission of the sins of many. He spake frequently of his decease all along; he preached it to Nicodemus, John iii. 14.; he went to Jerusalem, with holy resolution, at the last pass-over; "he went all the way journeying to Jerusalem;" he was the first in the company; he went

to Jerusalem to accomplish his decease, as to a triumph, accompanied by the hosannas of the multitude: he longed for the last passover; "with desire
 "have I desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer:" and he longed for his bloody baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and
 "how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" He went singing to his work of suffering; "he did sing
 "an hymn, and went out to the mount of olives." But what shall we say? for time would fail, and eternity itself will be too short, to speak of his glory, and of the wonders of his dying love, who accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. "Lo, these are
 "parts of his ways; and how small a part of him is
 "known or heard!" What can we think? or, what can we say? but that our thoughts are swallowed up, and that expression doth fail us, while we contemplate and behold the infinite evil of sin, the inexorable justice of God, and his infinite holiness, in the death and sufferings of the Lord of glory, who was crucified in Calvary; and that we must for ever adore the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge: and may we add, that we hope, through the grace of our Lord Jesus, to spend an entire eternity, in beholding
 "the Lamb, as it were slain, in the midst of the throne;" and that we shall, in a transport of love, wonder, and praise, delightfully meditate upon, and, with Moses and Elias, the prophets and apostles of the Lamb, and the martyrs of Jesus, talk together "of
 "the decease he accomplished at Jerusalem! And
 "thus shall we be ever with the Lord."

The DUTY of NATIONAL COVENANTING explained in several SERMONS, preached at the renovation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, in the bond adapted to our present situation and circumstances in this period; by the Associate Presbytery, at Abernethy, in the month of July 1744 *.

ISAIAH xix. 18.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts.

IN the preceding part of this chapter, you have an account of awful judgments denounced against Egypt. In this verse, and what follows in the chapter, you have an account of mercy reserved for Egypt in gospel-days. Egypt was enlightened

* To this discourse, when first published, was prefixed the following address: To the People of my pastoral charge. These notes were taken from my mouth, in the short-hand, by one of the hearers, when they were delivered unto you. I am sensible they labour under many defects; but I am willing they be put into your hands, in the familiar way in which they were preached to you, hoping that the Lord may, of his grace, condescend to bless them, to bring to your remembrance the solemn vows you are come under to the Most High God, and to excite you to an habitual-dependence upon the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to enable you daily to perform them. I have hereto subjoined the bond you have come under.

“WE, all and every one of us, though sensible of the de-
ceitfulness and unbelief of our own hearts, and however free

by the gospel, early after our Lord's ascension into heaven, by the ministry of some of the preachers of the gospel of Christ: and under the name of Egypt, and the promises of the grace of God made unto it, is likewise included the conversion of the Heathen and Gentile nations in gospel days, in those very

quently perplexed with doubts and fears anent our actual believing, yet desiring to essay, in the Lord's strength, and in obedience to his command, to glorify God, by believing his word of grace, contained in his covenant of promise, and, in the faith of his promise, to devote ourselves unto the Lord in a covenant of duty; *We do*, with our hands lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD, hereby profess, and, before God, angels and men, solemnly declare, That, through the grace of God, and according to the measure of his grace given unto us, we do, with our whole hearts, take hold of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the only propitiation for our sins; his *Righteousness*, as the only foundation of our access to, and acceptance with God; his *Covenant* of free and rich promises, as our only charter for the heavenly inheritance; his *Word*, for our perfect and only rule of faith and practice; his SPIRIT, for our alone guide, to lead us into all truth revealed in his holy word, unto which nothing, at any time, is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. We avouch the LORD to be our GOD, and, in the strength of his promised grace, we *promise and swear*, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, That we shall walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice: and particularly, that we shall, by the Lord's grace, continue and abide in the profession, faith, and obedience of the foresaid true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, Presbyterial church-government and discipline; and that we shall, according to our several stations, places, and callings, contend and testify against all contrary evils, errors, and corruptions, particularly *Popery, Prelacy, Deism, Arianism, Arminianism*, and every error subversive to the doctrine of grace; as also *Independency, Latitudinarian tenets*, and the other evils named in the above confession of sin.

"In like manner, we *promise and swear*, That, by all means, which are lawful and warrantable for us, according to

places of the world, where Pagan darkness hath prevailed to the greatest height; for, by the gospel of the grace of God, the people that sat in darkness see a great light, and to those that were in the shadow of death light springs up.

the word of God, the approved and received standards of this church, and our known principles, we shall, in our several stations and callings, endeavour the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God; and to promote and advance our covenanted conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith and catechisms, form of church-government, and directory for worship, as these were received by this church.

“AND, in regard we are taught by the word of God, and bound by our covenants, National and Solemn League, to live together in the fear of God, and in love one to another, and to encourage one another in the work and cause of the Lord; and that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: therefore, in a dependence on the Lord's grace and strength, we, in the same manner, do *promise* and *swear*, That we shall, in our several places and callings, encourage and strengthen one another's hands, in pursuing our end and design of this our solemn oath and covenant; and that we shall endeavour a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ: and that, in our personal callings and particular families, we shall study to be good examples to one another of godliness and righteousness, and of every duty that we owe to God and man; and that we shall not give up ourselves to a detestable indifference and neutrality in the cause of God; but, denying ourselves, and our own things, we shall, above all things, seek the honour of God, and the good of his cause and people; and that, through grace, forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidences, we shall endeavour to depend upon the Lord, to walk by the rule of his word, and to hearken to his voice by his servants. In all which, professing our own weakness, we earnestly pray to God, who is the Father of mercies, through his Son Jesus Christ, to be merciful unto us, and to enable us, by the power of his Holy Spirit, that we may do our duty, unto the praises of his grace in the churches. Amen.”

In these words, then, we may remark these few things following.

1. THERE is a duty, and a solemn part of religious worship, which is to be performed and given to God in Egypt, now, by grace, brought into a church-state: "Five cities in the land of Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts." They shall not only swear by him, in a way of appeal unto him, as is ordinarily done for putting an end to controversies between man and man, but they shall swear allegiance to him: they shall enter into a covenant of duty, founded upon, and in consequence of their taking hold of his covenant of grace and promise.

2. You have the season of this duty; "In that day." The gospel-day, which is frequently pointed out in scripture by *that day*, as in Zech. xii. 10. 11. and xiii. 1. "In that day, when the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. In that day, when the day-spring from on high shall visit the Heathen nations and the land of Egypt." Egypt in particular: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts." Thus we see swearing to the Lord of hosts is a duty under the New Testament, as well as it was under the Old.

3. You have the parties engaged and employed in this part of solemn worship. They are but a few; "five cities in the land of Egypt." There were many cities in the land of Egypt; yet but five of a great many cities do swear to the Lord, and engage in this necessary duty of vowing to the Lord. And this teacheth us, by the way, that it is the duty of a few, of a remnant in a land, to avouch the Lord for their God: though the great bulk of the land or genera-

tion should be chargeable with slighting or opposing reformation-work, it must not hinder us from doing our duty, in renewing our covenant-engagements to the Lord: though few in the land join in this work, yet a few of many have God's warrant, in his strength, to essay the duty of vowing and swearing to Jacob's mighty God. "Five cities," in idolatrous Egypt, that were Heathens and outcasts, strangers to the covenant of promise, when gospel-light shines in Egypt, and they are enlightened by it, they shall swear to the Lord of hosts. Our fathers, in these lands, served other gods; they bowed to, and worshipped stocks and stones, under Pagan darkness, and were involved in the gross idolatry of the church of Rome, under Popish darkness; and at this day Heathenism, Deism, Atheism, Socinian and Arminian errors, have overspread the land, and a way is paved for introducing the idolatry and superstition of Rome, which already has got great entertainment in many places, as appears from the open saying of mass, and the growth of Popery in the land: yet, notwithstanding the lamentable condition our fathers were in under Popish darkness, when the Lord did clear their sky, they entered into a covenant of duty, to oppose the superstitions of Popery, Prelacy, and every other evil, contrary to the word of God, and to walk with God, and cleave to him. And although these lands, at this day, are over-run with the above errors and abominations, yet five cities, a few in these lands, are warranted to swear to the Lord of hosts.

4 In this verse we have a qualification of the covenanters, and those that swear to the Lord of hosts; namely, they are a people that speak the language of Canaan: "Five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan." The scripture-language

was the language of Canaan ; the Jews had the same dialect in which the scriptures were written ; and those who speak the language of Canaan, are such who prize the word of God, and duly read the same ; those who meditate upon the word of God ; those who rejoice in his word, as those who find great spoil ; who speak about the truths of his word, the doctrines of his word, and who meditate upon the great things of his law. They who speak the language of Canaan, speak concerning Christ, who is the very substance of the whole word : they have a favour of Christ in their words and actions, and in their whole conversation ; and their speaking the language of Canaan supposes they are citizens of Canaan, citizens of Zion ; for every country speaks its own language ; and it supposes they have been born in Zion, born from above, and are the children of Zion, who are joyful in their King. It must be the renewed heart that will or can speak the new dialect, the language of Canaan ; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. And this sheweth who will be true covenanters, namely, those who have their conversation in some measure in heaven, and speak the language of Canaan. They are far from speaking the language of Canaan who favour just of this earth, and speak about their worldly affairs on the Lord's day, and make intimation of their rouns and the like on the Lord's day ; a practice which has too much prevailed even in this place ; but, be it known unto you all, we, in the Lord's name, forbid and discharge any person whatsoever to be guilty of such a practice, for the future, on the Lord's day, by placading their papers on the church-doors, or otherwise intimating them on that holy day. You who are on your journey to Canaan, no wonder you speak the language of Canaan ; it is

your country you are going to, and no wonder you speak the language of your country; you are strangers on earth, but you look for a better country, that is, an heavenly.

5. You have the Object of all religious worship, and of this part of religious worship in particular, namely, the Lord of hosts. "They shall swear to the Lord of hosts;" to JEHOVAH, who has all the host and armies in heaven and earth at his command, and who doth what he pleaseth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. He alone is the sole and only Object of all divine worship and adoration. It is God then we have to do with, in renewing our covenant-engagements.

6. You have the form in which this duty is taught us, and delivered to us, namely, in the form of a promise: "Five cities in the land of Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts." Not only is it a warrantable duty, but it is a duty wrapt in a promise, which importeth that the Lord will assist his people in the discharge of this duty. He has undertaken for their furniture; "they shall swear to the Lord of hosts." If any duty, or this solemn duty, were left to our management, we would make a sad account of it; but JEHOVAH, our God, has taken it in hand; "They shall swear unto the Lord of hosts."

Lastly, In this verse you have the term or designation which one of these cities shall have; one of them shall be called, *The city of destruction*, or, *The city of the sun*, as some render it; one of them shall be called, *The city of light*, or, *of the valley of vision*; or one of them shall be called, *The city of destruction*; that is, one of them, or all of them put together,

will be reckoned, by their neighbours, the men of the world, to be cities of destruction; a self-ruining people, bringing destruction upon themselves, when they see them taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods for Christ and his cause. Or we may take it thus, The men of the world will seek to bring destruction upon them, because they are a people that are employed in witnessing for, and swearing unto the Lord of hosts; a work which the men of the world bear a great hatred unto, because a testimony against a course of defection is tormenting to the men that dwell on the earth.

FROM these words we may deduce the following doctrinal observation :

“ THAT as it is the duty of the church and people of God, in New-Testament times, to renew their national vows, and covenants, though they be but a few in number, compared with the opposers of a work of reformation; so they may warrantably trust a promising God, that he will enable them to perform that duty, to the praise of his grace.”

“ IN that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts.”

IN discoursing this doctrine, we shall endeavour, by the Lord's assistance,

I. To offer some remarks concerning this moral, necessary, and seasonable duty, of renewing our covenant-engagements, and swearing to the Lord of hosts.

II. SHEW, that this is a duty in New-Testament times, and even when the witnessing remnant are the smaller part, and but a few, compared with the opposers of reformation-work.

III. SPEAK of this solemn part of religious worship, vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts.

IV. SHEW, that we have a good ground and warrant to trust a promising God, that he will enable us to perform this duty of vowing and swearing to him, to the praise of his grace.

V. MAKE some application.

I. WE proceed then to the first thing proposed, namely, by divine assistance, to offer some remarks concerning this moral, necessary, and seasonable duty of renewing our covenant-engagements, and swearing to the Lord of hosts. And,

I. WE remark, that the oath of God, which we are to enter into, is not the covenant of grace, but it is a covenant of duty and gratitude; and all that have taken hold of the covenant of grace, are obliged to devote themselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty. There must be faith in Christ in the first place, and, in consequence of that, there ought to be an open professing of our faith in him, and obedience to him. When Gideon and Jephthah had wrought great deliverances in Israel, what was the voice of the people? Why, it was, "Rule thou over us." Christ has wrought a great salvation, and all the citizens of Zion desire him to rule over them, and they trust and confide in him alone; as it was said by Boaz to Ruth, "Blessed art thou of the Lord, seeing thou art come to trust under the wings of the God of Israel." The very nature of faith is just a trusting Emmanuel; and it is the voice of all the people, who are helped by grace to act faith on him, "Rule thou over us." Their voice is such, as that of the men who came to David in the hold. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Amazia, and

“ he said, Thine are we, O David, and on thy side,
 “ thou son of Jesse,” 1 Chron. xii. We say, it is
 not the covenant of grace, but a covenant of duty,
 which is founded upon, and consequential of our ta-
 king hold of the covenant of grace. For,

(1.) THE covenant of grace is a bundle of preci-
 ous promises, which God hath undertaken to perform
 to us for Christ’s sake. The covenant of duty is a
 bundle of duties, which, as instated in Christ, our
 new-covenant and sanctifying Head, we do promise,
 in his strength, to do and perform. (2.) The cove-
 nant of grace never was, and never shall, nor can
 be broken, because the parties contracting in it are,
 JEHOVAH the Father, on Heaven’s side, and JEHO-
 VAH the Son, on man’s side, as may be seen in Psalm
 lxxxix. throughout. But our covenant of duty and
 gratitude is frequently broken, and needs to be re-
 newed. (3.) The covenant of grace, as it stands
 fast with Christ, is the ground of all our faith, hope,
 and confidence before God: but our covenant of du-
 ty, is neither, in less nor more, a ground of hope, or
 confidence to us. If we value ourselves, less or more,
 upon the account of it, we do but idolize it. It is
 a mean of God’s appointment to impress deeply up-
 on our spirits a sense of our duty to God, a sense of
 our insufficiency to perform any duty acceptably, by
 any ability or power of our own, and to strengthen
 our dependence upon Christ alone for righteousness
 and strength: but if we trust to it as a ground of
 hope, we pervert the end and design of its institution,
 and abuse it, to perverse ends of our own invention.

2. WE remark, that our entering into, or renew-
 ing our covenant of duty at this day, is necessary and
 seasonable duty. There were weighty reasons, is

the days of Nehemiah, for renewing their covenant of duties, as we may see in the ninth chapter of his book and 38th verse: "And because of all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it, and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it. Because of all this," that is, for the weighty reasons mentioned in the preceding part of the chapter. And if we compare our case with theirs, we will find the same weighty reasons at this day, for renewing our covenant with the Lord our God. They renewed their covenant, because of the defections of these times, and upon the account of the corruptions that were brought in among them, Neh. ix. 34. 35.; and because of the judgments of God they were under, and because of other awful judgments they were farther threatened with, for their sin and apostasy, Neh. ix. 36. 37.; and that such are the circumstances of these times, must be evident to all who have any spiritual discerning. How manifold spiritual judgments are we under already! And what awful temporal judgments are we threatened with! And because of all these, we are to make a sure covenant.

3. WE remark, that due preparation is necessary, in order to our entering into this covenant of duty: slowness of spirit in making of vows, brings on slowness of spirit in performing the same: every solemn duty calls for solemn preparation; and this is a duty as solemn as any, to vow to Jacob's mighty God; we need then to prepare for such a work. As our Lord and Saviour commands to take heed how we hear the word preached, so we must take heed how we vow and swear to the Lord. In order to our preparation then, there are these few things necessary.

(1.) It is necessary, in order to our preparation, that we have faith in the Son of God; for "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. If you come to this duty without Christ, and faith in him, you will go away without acceptance; for "he hath made us accepted only in the beloved."

(2.) In order to our preparation, it is necessary that we take hold of God's covenant of promise: there can be no devoting ourselves aright to the Lord in a covenant of duty, unless we first take hold of God's covenant of promise. We must avouch the Lord to be our God; and, in the strength of his grace, promise to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. You see this duty of taking hold of God's covenant of grace, pointed out in Isaiah lvi. 6. 7. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord to be his servants; every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar." You are all warranted to take hold of God's covenant, even though you be the sons of the stranger. Your parents have taken hold of the seal of it for you, when you were infants; but that will be a witness against you, if you take not hold of his covenant yourselves, by faith in his word of grace and promise. But then,

(3.) As all men and women are at agreement with sin, so this agreement must be disannulled and broken, before you can enter into this covenant of duty: for if you regard iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear your prayers, neither will he accept your covenants and vows made to him. What a woful case are they in, who only profess to worship the

Lord, and still continue in their agreement with sin !
“ For what fellowship hath righteousness with un-
“ righteousness ? and what communion hath light
“ with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with
“ Belial ? ”

4. It is necessary, in order to our renewing covenant with God, that we be humbled for, and repent of our breach of former vows and engagements. This, we find, was the practice of Israel and Judah, Jer. l. 4. 5. “ In those days, and at that time,
“ saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come,
“ they and the children of Judah together, going and
“ weeping ; they shall go and seek the Lord their
“ God ; they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall
“ not be forgotten.” They ask the way, “ weeping as
“ they go.” Gospel-humiliation, that springs from faith’s looking on him whom we have pierced, is absolutely necessary in our joining to him in a covenant of duty : we need to have our former breaches removed, by a fresh application unto, and faith’s sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, that cleanseth from all sin ; thus betaking ourselves to the Fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

5. It is necessary, before you enter into this bond and oath, that you sit down and count the cost of such an undertaking as to enter into God’s covenant, Luke xiv. 28. “ Which of you intending to build a
“ tower, sitteth not down and counteth the cost,
“ whether he hath sufficient to finish it.” It has been seen of rash covenanters, that they have been so far from standing to their engagements, that every mo-

ing of their hand afterwards has been employed in pulling down Zion's towers, and in the building of Babylon. Now, in order to your counting the cost,

(1.) Examine your own hearts upon the articles of this covenant, which is to be sworn to the Lord of hosts. Put the question to your own hearts, and let every one say thus unto himself, Is it indeed the inward exercise of my soul, that from the heart I desire to essay, in the Lord's strength, to glorify God, by believing his word of grace contained in his covenant of promise? And is it the desire of my heart, in the faith of his promise, to devote myself to the Lord in a covenant of duty? Is it my concern and exercise to be enabled, with an uplifted heart, as well as uplifted hands, to profess and declare, that, through the Lord's grace, I take hold of Christ, as the only propitiation for my sins, of his righteousness, as the only ground of my acceptance with God, and of his covenant of free promises, as my only charter for eternal life? And is it the desire of my heart, by faith, to avouch the Lord to be my God, to take his word for my rule, and his Spirit for my guide? And after examining my duty of vowing to the Lord from the word, and after considering my insufficiency to pay my vows, and the strength that is in Christ to enable me to perform them, am I resolved to swear to the Lord, that in his strength I will walk in his ways, keep his commandments, and hearken to his voice? And do I resolve, through grace, to adhere unto the true reformed doctrine, worship, Presbyterial government, and discipline of the house of God? And do I also resolve, that, in my station and capacity, I shall oppose all contrary errors, such as Popery, Prelacy, Deism, Arianism, Arminianism, Independency, and Epi-

ordinarian principles? And do I resolve, in my station, to endeavour the reformation of England and Ireland, according to the word of God, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government? And do I resolve to strengthen the hands of my brethren in this great work and duty; and to endeavour, by grace, to have a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, and in my family and station to be a good example to others, and to observe every duty incumbent on me both to God and man? And do I resolve against all neutrality and indifference in this great work; and that, denying myself, I will prefer the honour of God, and the good of his cause and people, to every thing else; and that, forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, I will depend on the Lord alone?

(2.) As you are to count the cost, by examining your hearts upon every article of the bond, so you are to count what it must cost you, and what it may cost you. 1. There are some things it must cost you. [1.] It must cost you the renouncing of all confidence in the flesh, and betaking yourselves unto the dependence of faith upon Christ alone. [2.] It must cost you the death of all your idols, the mortification of all your corruptions, the breaking all your leagues with sin; a league with sin, and a league with God, can never stand together; there must be a warfare maintained, through grace, with every sin. [3.] It must cost you subordinating all your concerns to Christ's interest and glory. You must be denied to all worldly comforts, so as to be ready, in Christ's strength, to part with them all at his call. You must be of another spirit than the men of the world. Your eye must be upon another world. [4.] It must cost you the denying of all your self-righteousness and

doings, in point of access to, and acceptance with God; it is in the strength, and through the righteousness of Christ alone, that you can pay a vow. [5.] It must cost you a great deal of pains and labour. You see we undertake to endeavour the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, and among ourselves; so that says, that we must be at a great deal of pains to know our duty, and to follow it. You must not be indifferent about the times, as many are, who are only taken up about themselves, and have no concern for Zion. Some there are who have only a public religion, and know nothing of personal religion: but as such who have only a public religion, have no religion at all; so personal religion, and a concern for the cause of Christ, are joined together in the word of God; and what God has joined, we are not to separate. [6.] It must cost your maintaining an intercourse with Christ, and a daily traffic and commerce with the land that is afar off, to bring in, from time to time, by faith in the word of grace and promise, supplies of grace, to enable you for work and warfare, to do and to suffer.

2. THERE are some things it may cost you. It may cost you the spoiling of your goods; and, by grace, the Lord's people have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods for Christ. It may cost you bonds and imprisonment, Rev. ii. 10. "Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried." It may cost you your life; and therefore you ought to be in the disposition of the apostle, who said, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for the name of Jesus." It may cost you so much in the issue. But though it should not, you are to lay your ac-

count with all this cost, in adhering to the Lord and his cause; for all that are Christ's disciples, and sincere followers, they are martyrs in resolution; for except a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot be his disciple.

II. We proceed, in the second place, by divine assistance, to shew that this is a duty, in New-Testament times, and even when the witnessing remnant are the smaller part, and but a few, when compared with the opposers of reformation-work: and that it is a duty, at this day, to renew our covenant-engagements, will appear, if we consider,

I. THAT we live in the gospel-day, concerning which it was prophesied, that this duty should be gone about, as in our text, "In that day," viz. the gospel-day, or in the times of the New-Testament, "shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts." The gospel-day is a day of manifestation, wherein we see more clearly the glory of the Lord revealed; we see more clearly the covenant of grace, as it stands fast with Christ, which is the foundation on which all our vows and engagements must be built; we see the glory of his person, Emmanuel, God with us; we see more clearly that everlasting righteousness he has brought in, as the foundation of the faith and hope of men; we see the law fulfilled by him as a covenant, and delivered by him to us as a rule of life; we see more clearly the strong grounds and reasons for this, and every other moral duty, from the authority of God, the infinite perfection of his nature, and from his holiness, grace, and love, manifested in the face of Jesus Christ; we see more clearly the furniture that is in Christ, for

light and leading, to make known the way of duty, and the grace and strength that is communicated by him to us, to enable us to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hearken to his voice. Thus then it must be our duty, in particular, at this day, to vow to the Lord of hosts.

2. SEEING the ends of this duty, of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts, are the same, now as under the Old Testament, it must be our duty at this day, as well as it was theirs, when they renewed their covenant-engagements, in the days of Nehemiah, Josiah, and others. We are under as great and strong obligations to maintain the purity of God's worship, to adhere to his truths, and to walk closely with him, as they were; and we are as ready to turn aside from the Lord as they were. Our corruptions are as strong, and we are as ready to be forgetful of our obligations to the Lord as they were. Our graces are as weak, and we have as much need of this mean of God's appointment, to awaken our attention to duty, and to strengthen our faith and dependence upon the Lord, as they had.

3. THAT it is a duty at this day, as well as it was the duty of the Old-Testament church, to renew our covenant-engagements to the Lord, will appear, if we consider, that those very things that made this duty seasonable at that time, are to be found with us at this day. Why? They entered into a covenant with the Lord, upon the back of great deliverances, upon the back of the Red-sea deliverances, when the Lord had delivered them, and destroyed their enemies. And has not the Lord many a time delivered us in these lands, and wrought great salvation for us, from time to time? It was also in the

time of much backsliding and corruption, when they had mingled themselves with the people of the land, and came to see the necessity of being separated from them, as in the days of Ezra, chap. ix. They had mingled with the Heathen, and learned of them their way; and how far this is the case with us, at this day and time, is obvious to every attentive observer. We have been too long mingled with those who have either adopted or connived at the gross errors vented in these times; and we have been mingled with them in the backslidings and defections of the day; and therefore it is a season wherein we ought to return unto the Lord, to vow and swear that we shall walk with him in his strength. They renewed their covenants with the Lord, when they were under great judgments, as in Neh. ix. 37. They were in great distress; because of all which, they made a sure covenant, vers. 38. Are not we also in great distress, by the judgments of God already inflicted, and the awful judgments we are threatened with, a foreign sword being already drawn against the land? Are not we in great distress, by the division and neutrality of the day and time wherein we live, some who seemed to have the root of the matter, turning indifferent about the Lord's cause, and bitterly opposing that work, which once they appeared to be zealous for? Are not we in great distress by our deadness, formality, and spiritual plagues, by the Lord's hiding his face, and withdrawing from public ordinances, and from us in our retirements, in a great measure? As also, by our great insensibility in all these; for we are not turning to the hand that smiteth us, nor are we seeking the Lord of hosts! From all which, it is evident, that it is a necessary and a seasonable duty for us to renew our covenant engagements unto the Lord.

4. It is a moral duty, and therefore must be our duty at this day, as well as it was the duty of the Old-Testament church; for moral duties are of themselves binding and obligatory in all periods of the church. It is a duty enjoined in the third commandment of the moral law; and we are commanded, Psal. lxxvi. 11. to vow to the Lord, as well as to pay; "Vow and pay to the Lord your God." It is a moral duty that was both enjoined to the people of God, and practised by them in the days of Nehemiah, Josiah, and others. It was a duty practised by the saints of God in all ages. Job made a covenant with his eyes; and David did swear to keep God's righteous judgments, Psal. cxix. 106. "I have sworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." It is a duty that God graciously accepted and approved of, in Old-Testament times. And that it might evidently appear to be a moral duty of perpetual obligation, there are prophecies and promises of this duty, as acceptable worship to God under the gospel; as we may see, by comparing our text with the 21st verse of this chapter: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts." Vers. 21 "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." Thus it is a moral duty, and so a duty at this day.

5. It is a duty wherein God is glorified; and therefore it is our duty, at this day, to swear to the Lord of hosts, JEHOVAH TZEBAOTH. It is a very solemn piece of worship. The Lord has sworn, that to him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, Is. xlv. 23. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone

“ out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” He is glorified by this part of solemn worship, because by it we profess our faith in, and reverence towards the infinite JEHOVAH, “ God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” And to swear by the name of the Lord of hosts, is to profess the strong obligation we are under to cleave unto him with purpose of heart, and to profess our own utter inability to keep any of our vows and engagements. To swear by his name, is just to call in the name of JEHOVAH, the name of God, as in Christ, to our assistance, in paying our vows. To call on his name, that is, all his attributes and perfections, his grace, love, and mercy, his power, faithfulness, and holiness, as glorified in Christ, to our assistance, in this great work of our walking closely with God, and obeying his voice. It glorifies him. Why? Because it is just the highest expression of the quiet and assured confidence of faith, upon the name and attributes of God, as glorified in Christ, for our assistance and through-bearing, in following him fully; and that he will see to the performance of all our vows made unto him. “ They shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it.” He will enable to a single and sincere performance of vows; he will make our hearts sound in his statutes; he will give us the saving knowledge of the Lord, and strengthen us to walk closely with God. And it is a duty wherein God is glorified, because it is a duty wherein faith is conspicuously manifested; and to act faith upon God, is a glorifying of God; for it is said of Abraham, “ he was strong in the faith, giving glory to God.”

6. THAT it is our duty, though the smaller part, and though a few in number, compared with the op-

posers of reformation-work, is plainly laid before us in the text: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts." *five cities*, a few in number, even in the midst of idolatrous Egypt, *shall swear to the Lord of hosts*. Five cities were but a very few of the cities of that great and flourishing kingdom of Egypt. Though the bulk regard not this as a duty of the times; though one part be profaning his holy name, another part indifferent about his cause, and another part walking after the lusts of their own hearts; yet *five cities*, a few, are to swear to the Lord of hosts. And it is their duty so to do, even in such a time; because it is a duty in which God is glorified, and a moral duty, as has been shewn; therefore the duty of a few, who would desire to obey the voice of the Lord, though the *bulk* should make light of this, as well as of the other duties. We cannot be absolved from a moral duty; we cannot be absolved from the observation of the Sabbath, though many are guilty of profaning the Sabbath: so no more from this duty of swearing to the Lord of hosts, though the great bulk of men of this generation be against it.

7. THAT it is our duty, at this day, to renew our covenant-engagements to the Lord, though the smaller number, will appear, if we consider that it is a duty, not only plainly taught and laid before us in the Old Testament, but it is a duty practised by the church in New-Testament times: for not only is it prophesied by the inspired apostle John, in the Revelation, "The kingdoms of this earth are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;" which, in some measure, has had its accomplishment in the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, their surrendering themselves to the Lord, and swearing

allegiance to Zion's King, in our Covenants, National and Solemn League. But it is likewise plainly asserted, that the Macedonians gave themselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty, wherein they devoted themselves to the Lord, and vowed to keep his commandments, and to obey his voice. 2 Cor. vii. 5. "This they did not as we hoped, but first gave their ownelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." First gave their ownelves to the Lord. It must be our duty, as well as of the Macedonians, to give our ownelves to the Lord. The apostle is speaking there, in the 4th verse, of their giving of their substance for the support of the cause of Christ; but he gives us to know, that they kept the due order. "They did not, as we hoped," says he, "but first they gave their ownelves to the Lord." We call you in this company to this duty and exercise, to give your ownelves to the Lord, as the Macedonians did. It is a good exercise for every day, and for the Lord's day. O whose are you, and to whom do you belong? The Lord's people, who have given themselves to the Lord, have this inscription written upon them, "Ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price." Ye are Christ's. Alas! some of you are like the straying sheep upon the mountains, who have not come to Christ, the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. Be it known to you, the Son of God is come to seek and to save that which was lost; and his voice is, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." He is come to bring you to his fold, and to save you from your sins; and he calleth you by name: "My sheep know my voice, and they follow me; and I give to them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand. To you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." What was thy work this morning? Was it to give yourself

to the Lord? Why, here is good work for you, rich and poor, young and old men, young and old women: here is good work for you all; he is willing to give and to take; he has given his Son to you; "For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given," *Is. ix. 6.* O believe God's record, that he giveth to you his Son, and that there is life for you in his Son. He is willing to receive you, and will not you receive a given Christ? He is given to you this day, as God your Saviour, as the Lord your righteousness and strength; and his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet; he is altogether lovely: his voice is to you, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards." As he is a giving God in Christ, so he is willing to receive you. What is thy language then? Take with you words, and say to him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." He is willing to receive you just as you are, without any farther delay: O give yourselves then to the Lord. Here is an altar of acceptance; "He hath made us accepted in the beloved."

3. AND lastly, upon this head, that it is a duty, at this day, to renew our covenant-engagements to the Lord, will appear, if we consider that it is a duty, wherein the special and gracious influence of the Holy Spirit is promised, to enable to perform it acceptably. *Is. xlv. 3. 4. 5.* "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as, among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One

“ shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another shall call
“ himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall
“ subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname
“ himself by the name of Israel.” Here are good
news. Why? Here is the promise of the Spirit to
enable us to say, We are the Lord’s. We cannot
say a better saying; but none of Adam’s house ever
could have said this, if it were not through the influ-
ence of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Lord
came upon Amazai, when he came to David in the
hold, and he said, “ Thine are we, O David; and
“ on thy side, thou son of Jesse:” so it must be in this
way that we must essay this great work of vowing and
swearing to the Lord of hosts. Here then is grace
promised to enable us to the right performance of this
duty in our retirements, and to fit and prepare us for
doing it in a public manner. “ I will pour water
“ upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry
“ ground.” The Holy Ghost is compared to water,
and floods of water: and he has promised to pour him-
out as floods of water. We are dry ground at this
day, let us then plead that he may pour his Spirit up-
on us; plead the promise, pray over the promise, be-
lieve the promise, pray it over with application to
yourselves, as to the place, and for the minister of the
place, that there may be the sound of the abundance
of rain; and that the Lord may be as the dew to
Israel, and revive his work in the midst of the years.
So much for the second thing proposed.

BEFORE we proceed to the *third* general head in
the method, namely, To speak of this solemn part of
religious worship, *vowing* and *swearing* to the Lord
of hosts; let us consider, that this work and duty, to
be done in the gospel-day, is not a work to be per-
formed in order to obtain life. No! for the work of

of redemption is a finished work. The glorious Head having finished his work, has entered into his rest, and left us nothing to do, in point of impetration and obtaining acceptance with God. He has left us nothing to do, in the matter of fulfilling the law as a covenant of works: but yet he will do much in his people. He will work sanctification and holiness in all those that are truly justified, and make them to be fruitful in good works. Not that they may live, but because they do live, being justified already: not in point of working for life, but of doing from life: not to merit any thing at the hand of God, but to testify their thankfulness to God: not to share of the glory with Christ of our own salvation, in less or in more, but that we may be conformed to him, by his Spirit dwelling in us, in point of sanctification. All this our doing is to be in a way of union with him, and he working all our works in us. Although the Lord's people are not to fulfil the law, thereby to obtain life, yet they are under the law to Christ; yea, under the most strict and solemn ties to gospel-holiness, and to walk closely with God, that thereby they may evidence that they are live from the dead. "The statutes of the Lord do rejoice their heart: to them the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening their eyes; his judgments are to them righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey to the mouth." His whole will is sweeter to them than the honey-comb: his law comes just along with his promise, hand in hand, to his people; and all the furniture for vowing and swearing to the Lord, and for the performance of every other duty required, comes just wrapped up in the promise; and this makes all sweet and refreshing to his followers; and nothing more delightful in it, than that it is all to be done in

Borrowed strength, and all to be done to the glory of the Head; and self to be sunk down into eternal oblivion, and a God in Christ alone to bear all the glory.

HAVING thus given you a general hint, that vowing to the Lord of hosts is to be managed in a gospel-way, and not in a legal manner, we proceed,

III. To the *third* general head in the method, namely, To speak of this duty, this solemn part of religious worship, vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts. And, in discoursing this head, we would, endeavour, by grace,

FIRST, To speak of the nature of this solemn part of religious worship.

SECONDLY, Of the matter of this solemn vow and covenant under consideration.

THIRDEY, Of the manner in which this solemn part of religious worship is to be performed and gone about. And,

FIRST, As to the nature of this solemn part of religious worship, it is to be observed,

1. THAT we are not to put our personal covenanting, or national covenants, in the room of the covenant of grace. Personal covenanting and national covenanting are of the same nature and kind, and differ only, as the one is transacted by persons, singly and separately considered, and the other by many persons jointly in a body: but many mismanage personal covenanting, and likewise national covenanting; for too many apprehend, that God, in the word, declares himself willing to be our

God, upon certain terms or conditions to be performed by us, different from believing the free promise of the gospel with application to ourselves; and therefore they do accordingly make a covenant with God, taking him for their God upon those terms, to be by them performed in the strength of grace, promising and vowing, that if God will be their God, pardon their sins, and save their souls, they will, for their part, be his people, faithfully serve him all the days of their lives, watching against all known sin, and performing every known duty. There are some mistakes here we are to beware of. (1.) This is to confound and mingle the covenant of grace and our covenant of duty together, as if they were the same. The covenant of grace was made from eternity between the Father and the Son: our covenant of duty is to be made when we have taken hold of God's covenant of grace; and never till then are we suitably prepared for this solemn work. (2.) This is to bring in ourselves, as parties transacting in the covenant of grace: whereas Christ alone, as the second Adam, was the party-contractor in that covenant upon man's side, as appears from the 89th Psalm throughout. God never did, nor ever will transact with any sinner of Adam's family. There is nothing we can perform, nothing we can implement in this matter: and how then can we be transactors in the covenant of grace? His holiness will not permit; his justice will not allow; his infinite wisdom will not admit of a transaction with any sinner at first hand. But, (3.) This would be to bring in ourselves, our doings, or what we are helped to do by grace, into the conditional part of the covenant of grace, and so to overthrow the doctrine of free grace, to take Christ's work out of his hand, to subvert the only foundation of the faith and hope of perishing souls, and to dispa-

vage the righteousness of Christ, the second Adam, which is the only proper and real condition of the covenant of grace.

2. It is to be observed, in order to our considering the nature of this transaction, that, by our believing the promise of God in his word, and our trusting in the person of Christ, who is to be believed upon in the gospel of the grace of God, we are united to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Covenant-head, and thereby we are personally entered into the covenant of grace, so as in his right to have a saving interest in the righteousness of Christ, the condition of the covenant performed by him. His doing is ours, being united to him by faith. His righteousness is ours, for he is "JEHOVAH our righteousness." Being united to him, we have a right to eternal life, the promise of the covenant made to him; that is, eternal life becomes ours, upon the account of his eternal righteousness, Rom. v. 17. John x. 10. "He that hath the Son, hath life:" he hath life in the first-fruits of it; he hath the beginning of life in possession, by having the Son; he hath the sure title and right to eternal life, and he shall have the full possession of it in due time.

3. We observe, that although a consent to take Christ as our Lord, to be ruled and governed by him, and to observe and keep his commandments, be not the condition and terms of the covenant of grace; as we have already shewn, by which doctrine legalists have subverted the gospel of Christ, and turned the covenant of grace into a new law, or new form of a covenant of works; yet, upon the back of our believing the promise, and trusting on the person of Christ, by which we are personally entered into the

covenant, there doth necessarily follow an absolute consent to take Christ for our Husband, Head, and Lord; a consent to take Christ, as our only Priest, to be saved by his righteousness alone; for our only Prophet, Teacher, and Guide; for our alone King and Lord, resigning ourselves wholly to him in soul and body, to be rescued by his power from sin, death, the devil, and this present evil world; for to serve him for ever, and to be ruled by the will of his command as to our duty, and to be disposed of, according to the will of his providence as to our lot: a consent to renounce every known sin; a consent to renounce every lust and idol, and all other lords beside him; a consent to submit to whatever he sees meet to lay upon us; a consent to take up our cross and follow him, as he shall call us to it; and all by his grace, and in his strength alone, without which we can do nothing. What is here represented contains the substance of a covenant of duty, which all of us are bound to in our baptismal vows, but which we cannot rightly engage unto, until first in order we take hold of God's covenant of promise, by faith in the Son of God, with whom the covenant of grace is made, and doth stand fast: and this covenant of duty, as it is branched out in the particular duties that belong to it, is either a personal covenant of one person, or a national covenant of many persons in one nation joined together.

4. As to the nature of this duty, we observe, that our devoting ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty, is not a thing indifferent, left to us to do it, or not to do it at our pleasure: but it is a solemn part of religious worship, enjoined to us both in the first and third commandment of the moral law; and therefore we are not left at our own liberty, whether we

will do it or not. It is true, the far greater part are in noways fit for joining in this solemn part of religious worship, because they have not taken hold of God's covenant of grace: this would be to invert the order of matters, and to build without a foundation. None are to be imposed upon in this matter; yea, none are to be admitted to join in this solemn duty, but such persons as are free of public scandal, and abstain from the outbreakings that are too customary in the day and time wherein we live; and the persons to be admitted to this solemn part of religious worship, are such as have a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, and keep up the worship of God in their families morning and evening. There are many who observe it in the evening, but neglect it in the morning: but it is good to shew forth his loving-kindness every morning in this duty of family-worship, as well as by secret worship. We have family-mercies every morning to praise him for; family-wants and needs every morning that need to be supplied. We need family- blessings, as well as personal blessings, every morning; and we are to begin the day, as well as end the day, with God, and to walk with him all the day long. We are all engaged to this in our baptism. Did we not, in our baptism, engage to obey his commandments, and this amongst the rest? It is dangerous to break vows. But, to return to the purpose in hand, we say, This duty of swearing to the Lord of hosts is not a thing indifferent, left to us to do, or not, at our pleasure: but it is a part of solemn religious worship, commanded both in the first and third commandments of the moral law: and that it is a part of solemn religious worship, will appear, if we consider, 1. That JEHOVAH, the infinite Being, the Object of all divine worship and adoration, is the party to whom the vow is made; he is the party to

whom our baptismal vows were made, to whom our national vows were made, and to whom our sacramental vows are made; he is the party to whom this vow is to be explicitly made. For it is said to be a swearing to the Lord of hosts, "Jehovah-Tzebaoth." "The Lord of the armies," as in the first language. He is the party with whom we are to be concerned in this solemn part of religious worship. How solemn must it be then, if we consider the Object of it! It is JEHOVAH, who is Being itself, and the Fountain of all being; the eternal God, the Ancient of days, the immutable, unchangeable God, "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He is the omnipotent JEHOVAH, "in whom we live, move, and have our being. Jehovah-Tzebaoth, the Lord of hosts." Why? He has all the hosts of heaven at his command. All the armies of heaven and earth are under his controul. "He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this earth." He is JEHOVAH, to whom we swear, or who is the party concerned in our vowing and swearing: JEHOVAH the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one in essence, but three distinct persons. O! he is JEHOVAH, a God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself: he is the God of salvation: he is JEHOVAH, who made a covenant with his chosen, with JEHOVAH, his eternal Son, as the contracting party on man's side of the covenant: he is JEHOVAH, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and sin: he is JEHOVAH, that passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage, because he delighteth in mercy: he is JEHOVAH that sanctifieth us; I JEHOVAH, "that sanctifieth you, am holy: he is JEHOVAH our healer; his name is JEHOVAH-ROFHE, the Lord that healeth us: he is

JEHOVAH, our God and Redeemer, and therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments. O! he is **JEHOVAH** our God, who is the party to whom the vow is made: "Vow to the Lord your God, and pay: let all that be round about him bring presents to him that ought to be feared," Psal. lxxvi. at the close. He is the Lord our God, our God in Christ's right and title. "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God," saith our Lord to his disciples. Thus **JEHOVAH** is the party to whom the vow is made. But then, 2. It is a very solemn part of religious worship, our vowing to the Lord, if we consider, that not only is **JEHOVAH** the party into whose presence we come in this act of religious worship, but it is a vow and a promise to **JEHOVAH**; it is a promissory vow to the Lord, and with God we have to do, in this part of solemn worship, in a very immediate manner. In praying, we seek the Lord; in praising, we extol and magnify the Lord: but, in vowing, we swear to the Lord; we promise that, in the strength of his grace, we will obey his commandments, and hearken to his voice. O then, how solemn must it be! For here we bind our souls to him in a promissory vow. **JEHOVAH** is every where present, and so he is witness to our promise; he is the all-seeing God, and so knows our very thoughts afar off; he knows if there be such an heart in us, as to walk in his ways, and hearken to his voice; and certainly such a disposition is not in us, unless he give it himself; and we ought to beware of deferring to pay our promissory vow to him, for better not to vow, than to vow and not to pay. A breach of promise to him must be a great iniquity. If you break your promise to your neighbour, it is a great fault; but if you break your promise of fealty to your king, that is a capital crime. Must not therefore the breach of

our promise to God be an evil of the worst nature? As it is a promise, so it is a promise in his strength; if it be not a promising and vowing in his strength, it is not right and acceptable worship; and it is a professing, 1. That you have no heart, no strength or ability of your own to make or keep the promise. 2. There must be in this promissory vow, a believing that there is strength in the new-covenant Head, to enable you to perform your promise and vow; it is a believing that there is all fulness in him for you. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength," *Is.* xlv. 24. 3. This vowing and promising to the Lord includes in it the exercise of faith, in making a particular application to our own souls, of that grace and strength of Christ contained in his word of promise, believing that his grace and strength shall be forthcoming to us, as in making, so in paying our promise and vow; as in the 21st verse of this chapter, "They shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." Thus it is an actual be-taking of ourselves to that strength that is in him, believing he will be forthcoming to us in this work and duty; so that his hand, we see, is just at every work that his people are engaged in; and therefore we are not to go about it in a legal way and manner, trusting in less or more to any thing that we can do; but we are to trust himself with the whole of it, and then the duty will be managed to his praise and our own comfort.

BUT to proceed, there is a great solemnity in this act of religious worship, if we consider, that it is not only a promise and vow to the Lord, but it is a vow and promise accompanied with the solemnity of an oath; for it is a "swearing to the Lord of hosts." Sometimes there are cove-

wants and leagues entered into without express oaths; but when oaths are added, the matter is more solemn. This then must be a very solemn piece of worship, when the name of JEHOVAH is invoked in the matter: "They shall swear to the Lord of hosts." There are two or three things we may notice here, for clearing this point. (1.) There is a swearing to the covenant of JEHOVAH, to the covenant made between JEHOVAH the Father, and JEHOVAH the Son, and JEHOVAH the Holy Ghost, from all eternity: for in this vow there is a swearing, that all our strength, and furniture for work and warfare, is wholly and only in this new-covenant Head, and in this new covenant itself, as it stands fast with Christ, God's chosen; it being, in the evangelic nature of this vow, a swearing in the strength of that grace that is held out to us in the covenant of promise. Thus it is a swearing to God's covenant of promise; and that he has made this covenant with his Chosen, and that Christ, his Chosen, is the Head of this covenant: that he is the nail fastened in the sure place, that bears all the vessels of his Father's house, of greater and smaller quantity: that all our springs are in him: that all the grace and furniture, for work and duty, that are bestowed upon the church of the first-born, it all comes from him, and is communicated by him. This may be one reason, among others, why he will have us swear to him in a covenant of duty, because the covenant of grace is a sworn covenant. The first covenant made with the first Adam, was not a sworn covenant; but when God introduces a new covenant made with his eternal Son, the second Adam, that covenant is a sworn covenant; as in Psal. lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my Chosen: I have sworn unto David my servant." Vers. 35. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David."

And as it was sworn to Christ, the Head of the church, so it was sworn to the church, which is his seed. Thus it was sworn to Abraham; for when God could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely, blessing, I will bless thee," &c. Blessing, I will bless thee, through my Son, the new-covenant Head, to whom I have sworn by my holiness. This covenant was also sworn by the Son, the Head and Surety of it, Psal. cxxxii. 1. "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions," vers. 2. "How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob." What was the nature of the oath? "Surely, I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." This was literally fulfilled in David; but it is evident, a greater than David is here. David was the type, Jesus Christ the antitype. That it is he who is here spoken of, you may see, by reading through the psalm. In vers. 13. it is said, "The Lord hath chosen Zion, and desired it for his rest for ever." Our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of David, left his Father's bosom, and came to this earth, in his incarnation, and took no rest, had no place where to lay his head, and gave not over the work, till he had prepared a rest for Jacob's mighty God; and having finished the work, God said of Zion, "This is my rest for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it;" for Christ is God's everlasting rest. Here then we have the great Antitype of David swearing this covenant of grace. He swore and vowed to the mighty God of Jacob; and though the church of the first-born are not parties in the covenant of grace, yet the Lord, by his grace, makes them all take hold of the covenant, founded upon Christ's fulfilling

the condition of it, as a public Head and Surety. And what is our swearing to the Lord in a covenant of duty? It is just our swearing our Amen to that covenant, that stands fast with Christ, the true David. "They shall swear to the Lord of hosts." But then, as there is here a swearing to the covenant of JEHOVAH; so,

(2.) THERE is, in this swearing to the Lord of hosts, a solemn profession, yea, a solemn swearing, that we are shipwrecked men in the first covenant: that we have neither house nor hold in the first Adam: that we are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; and particularly, that as we have nothing but sin and plagues, so likewise, that we are full of enmity to all that is good, and consequently have no strength to vow, or pay our vows to the Lord.

(3.) THERE is, in this swearing to the Lord of hosts, a swearing that there is a fulness of righteousness and strength in the new-covenant Head, to answer all our wants and needs, to suit all our necessities, to suit every sad case we are or can be in: that there is strength in him, furniture in him, through-bearing in him; and all this in him, to be communicated to us, to enable us, both in the duty of vowing, and paying our vows to the Lord of hosts.

(4.) IN this swearing to the Lord of hosts, there is a solemn swearing to some particular clauses and articles. And,

1. THERE is a solemn swearing to an article of *acceptation*; that we accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Head, our Husband, our Lord, and as God our Saviour; and that, in the strength of this new-covenant

grace, we thus accept of him as our All. O Sirs, have you any objection against doing this in his strength? But we tell you, before you do this, you must first believe in him, be married with him; you must first be joined to the Lord, as one spirit with him, before you be in case, in the way of faith's dependence upon that grace that is in him, to join in this duty of swearing to him in a covenant of duty. I say, there is here a swearing to an article of acceptation, that we accept of him, as JEHOVAH our righteousness, and as JEHOVAH our strength; as the Captain of our salvation, as our Prophet, Priest, and King; as our Husband, Head, and Lord: that we accept of him, as our sin-subduing Lord, to subdue us to himself, to subdue our unbelief, our heart-enmity, and all our lusts and corruptions; to subdue us more and more to himself; and, as our Lord, to rule over us, and subdue his enemies in us, and give us the victory over them all, making us more than conquerors through him that loved us. We swear to an acceptation of him, as our leader and guide, through all our dark steps while here, and who will afterward bring us to glory.

2. We swear not only to an article of acceptation, but also to an article of *dedication*. The article of dedication, as we shewed, is expressed, by our saying that we are the Lord's, *Ist. xlv. 5.* "One shall say, I am the Lord's." That is a good saying; but we cannot say it, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Well, this is in the promise, *vers. 3.* "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty. One shall say, 'I am the Lord's;'" that is to say, they shall say it one by one, every one for himself. You who are an husband, you cannot say it for your wife; parents cannot say it for their children: every one must say it for himself. And it is, (1.) A personal saying,

a personal dedication, "One shall say, I am the Lord's." (2.) As it is a personal saying, so you see it must be a saying it under the influence of the Spirit of promise: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.—One shall say, I am the Lord's." His Spirit is promised, and therefore we are to look for his coming, that we may be enabled to mint at lisping out this saying, in his strength. (3.) This saying, "I am the Lord's," it is just a saying it in the name of Christ, "I am the Lord's," to be accepted in the Beloved; to be an offering on the gospel-altar, the altar of much incense, the altar that sanctifieth the gift. It is a saying this by the Spirit of Christ, and in the name of Christ; therefore it is said, "Your burnt-offerings shall be accepted on mine altar," *Is. lvi. 7.* (4.) This is a well-warranted saying; so well warranted, that every one in this worshipping assembly is warranted to speak it out for himself, in the name of Christ. "One shall say, I am the Lord's." Are you not well-warranted to speak out this saying, when it is put in a promise? "One shall say, I am the Lord's." O will you doubt of your warrant? Have you not the best of warrants to say what is contained in the word of promise? There is nothing put in a promise, but what is for the glory of God; and it is in the word of promise, "One shall say, I am the Lord's;" therefore it is for his glory, that you man, you woman, you lad, and you lass, say this night, "I am the Lord's;" that is, I am devoted to the Lord, and accepted of God, through Christ, and his everlasting righteousness. There is a full ground for you all to say this, when it is in the word of promise; and there is full grounds for your acceptance in your mints to say it. The ground is the same for every one here to say, "I am the Lord's;" I am the Lord's, to be received.

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and accepted to his favour, and to be devoted to him, just as perfumed with the incense of Christ, the Angel of the covenant, who stands at the golden altar, and who hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Will you doubt of acceptance then? He was never refused acceptance to any that came to God in his name. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." O! then, there is wide and broad room for your acceptance, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Many have come, and are accepted in him, and yet there is room for you. "Your burnt-offerings shall be accepted on mine altar." Let not the son of the stranger say, I am a dry tree; I am not called; though others be called to say, "I am the Lord's," he will not accept of me. Why? Say not so, O sinner; you are warranted to say it for thyself in Christ's right; "I am the Lord's."

BUT then, as there is, in the article of dedication, a saying, I am the Lord's; so there is in it a *subscribing* with the hand to the Lord: "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." And that says, 1: That it is a distinct transaction. It says, 2: That it is not to be recalled again; it is a putting our hand to it; saying with the church, in the 80th psalm, at the close, "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand; so will not we go back from thee." But then, 3. As there is, in the article of dedication, a saying, I am the Lord's, a subscribing with the hand to the Lord; so there is a *sirnaming* by the name of Israel, as in the close of the 5th verse of that 44th of Isaiah.

Now, this sirnaming by the name of Israel, implies, (1.) Some supernatural revelation of Christ, as God's Servant, in whom he will be glorified: just a view of him, as the new-covenant Head,

that hath finished the work that was given him to do; and as the justice-satisfying Head, through whom God is accessible by sinful men, he having fulfilled all righteousness: just a view of him, as that infinite person, through whom all our worship is, or can be accepted, and in whom only God has glory and honour; and as the Head of the worshipping assembly, both of the upper and lower house; a view of him, as the great worker of every work that is for the glory and honour of God; every work that is done through the land, and in our hearts, to the glory of God, his hand is at it; and as he works the work, so he must bear the glory.

(2.) "SHALL surname himself by the name of Israel." Why? It implies that you have given up with your own name, and all your self-righteousness and self-confidence; and that you have given up your name to be swallowed up in the name of Christ, who is God's Israel, in whom he is glorified. O! You will not only be called by his name, but you will eat his bread, and wear his apparel; you will have all from him, and you will have your name out of sight, and his only to be known and remembered. "Surname himself by the name of Israel." Just as those who are adopted children, they belong to a new house and family, and have a new name; they lose all their name in the consideration they stood in before: so doth the soul in this article of dedication, they surname themselves by the name of Israel.

(3.) "SHALL surname himself by the name of Israel." It implies the expectation of faith, to live upon Israel their Head. They have got a new name, and are admitted to new privileges; to live on Christ by faith, that they may live to his praise.

(4.) THIS article of dedication is expressed by a *giving ourselves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. viii. 4. 5. Paul says of the Macedonians, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and then unto us, by the will of God." It is a giving our understandings to the Lord, and that in order to be taught by the Lord: for our Lord saith, John vi. 45. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." And seeing the promise is universal, every one of us is warranted to give up ourselves to the Lord, this very moment, to be taught of God; and, by his teaching the heart of the rash, shall understand knowledge. Seeing God is the teacher, and has taken teaching-work in hand, the most ignorant sinner, the dullest scholar in all this assembly, may take encouragement from it; and every one of us may resign and give up ourselves to the Lord, to be taught of God; to see the wonders of his law, and to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. He hath said, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: I will betrothe thee unto me in loving-kindness, and thou shalt know the Lord." But then we are to give our wills to the Lord, to chuse him for our God and Portion in Christ's right; of whom it is said, as the new-covenant Head, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation," Psal. lxxxix. 26. This is the shout and cry of the elder brother; and all the younger brethren may lift up their voice, and sing, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." In the right of his eternal Son, we may and ought to chuse God for our God, his word for our rule, his Spirit for our guide, his glory for our last and highest end. But then we are to give our

consciences to the Lord, to receive his orders, and to be a faithful deputy for him in our soul; our affections to him, to fear him with a holy, filial, and reverential fear; to love him with a superlative love, and to delight in him above all things. We are to give our whole soul to him in all its powers and faculties, and to present our bodies to him in all its members. We are to give our ears to him, to hear his gospel; our eyes to him, to read his word, and behold his works; our feet, to run his errands; our lips and tongues, to praise him, to pray to him, and to commend him to others. We are to give our whole man unto the Lord, as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, which is our reasonable service.

(5.) THIS article of dedication is likewise expressed in scripture, by a *joining ourselves to the Lord*, in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten, Jer. l. 5. This exercise of joining ourselves to the Lord, may either be taken for the uniting act of faith, according to another reading of the words, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord; the perpetual covenant shall not be forgotten." Let us join ourselves to JEHOVAH, by believing the promise, and trusting in the person of Christ, the new covenant Head; for the everlasting covenant made with Christ shall not be forgotten of God; and we may build our hope for eternity upon the promise of God, and his covenant that stands fast with Christ. God will be ever mindful of his covenant: it is the chief of his ways. Or, as it seems to be more agreeable to the scope of the place, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord," by a covenant of duty never to be forgotten, but to be remembered by us, as a sacred bond of our depending upon the grace of Christ and his

strength; cleaving to him with purpose of heart, and daily paying the vows we have come under to the Lord. This is a joining ourselves to the train and retinue of the Lamb, that stands upon the mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 1. It is a joining ourselves to the witnesses of Christ, and to the witnesses of Scotland's, England's, and Ireland's covenanted reformation: a joining ourselves to the disciples of Christ, to the confessors and martyrs of Jesus, by believing and adhering to the same cause of Christ, which they witnessed for, and for which they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; by professing the same faith, doctrine, discipline, worship, and government, which the martyrs of Jesus both contended and suffered for in this land: a joining ourselves to Christ, as our sin-subduing Lord, and the Captain of our salvation: a joining ourselves to those armies that are in heaven riding on white horses, who follow him, whose name is Faithful and True, and who is King of kings, and Lord of lords: it is a joining ourselves to JEHOVAH, to serve him, to love the name of JEHOVAH, and to be his servants, Is. lvi. 6. O how blessed an exercise is this, under the influence of the Spirit of promise? To serve him in such a bond of service, duty, and love; to serve him, is the choicest liberty, and to love him, is to breathe in the air of heaven; for as love will be perfected in the church triumphant, so in that place his servants shall see his face; and love to him, and praising of him, will there for ever be the exercise of the general assembly of the church of the first-born that are written in heaven. It is only under the influence of the Spirit of promise that we can mint at this duty; that we can join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant, never to be forgotten. It

will never be forgotten by God; and it must not be forgotten by us. And to encourage our faith, and excite our dependence on Christ, let us look to him, let us walk up and down in his name, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only. So much for a hint of this article of dedication, to which we swear in our vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts.

3. In this vow and covenant, we swear not only to an article of acceptance, to an article of dedication, but also we swear to an article of *renunciation*. We must all acknowledge to our God, that other lords beside him have had the dominion over us; but resolve that now, by his grace, we will make only mention of his name, *Is. xxvi. 3.* It is to be our work to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to renounce all confidence in the flesh; to deny ourselves, renouncing our self-righteousness, self-seeking, and self-confidence. We must renounce all our spiritual enemies, such as the devil, the world, and the flesh; the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; and in the name and strength of the Captain of salvation, we are to maintain a warfare against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. We must lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset us; and resolve, in the strength of grace, to be upright before the Lord, and to keep ourselves from our own iniquity. As this work is great, so there is furniture and provision in the new covenant, to enable us to renounce all the enemies of Christ, and to take the field against all the legions of hell, in us or around us, *Hos. xiv. 4. 5. 8.* verses compared; “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew to Israel.—Ephraim shall say, What have I any more to do with idols?” Under the

influences of the Holy Spirit, wherein Christ is as the dew to Israel; we may say, and shall say it, What have I any more to do with idols? He will be to Israel as the dew that lies all night on their branches; he will be as the dew in his enlightening grace, his heart-drawing grace, his heart-melting and heart-thawing grace, coming down upon their branches. Then shall Israel say, "What have I any more to do with idols?" I have had too much to do with idols, too long to do with idols: but seeing JEHOVAH will heal my backslidings, and love me freely, what then have I any more to do with idols? Then shall Ephraim say, in the strength of his grace, who is as the dew to Israel, "I will have no more to do with idols;" I will have no confidence in myself, for righteousness and strength, but I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh mine aid. He is as the green fir-tree, from whom my fruit and fruitfulness is found; and therefore, under the influence of his grace, Ephraim is made to say, "I will have no more to do with idols," but through grace, fix all my confidence, faith, and hope, upon the God of Israel, bless myself in him, and glory in his holy name. Surely shall Israel say, In JEHOVAH "have I righteousness and strength." What have I to do to idolize any thing in the place of Christ? What have I to do to draw comfort from the creature? What have I to do to idolize the world, that is but transitory, and very vanity? What have I any more to do with self-sufficiency, for work or warfare, but to trust in JEHOVAH's all-sufficiency, for whatever he calls unto? Ephraim "shall say, What "have I any more to do with idols?" I have no more to do with the pleasures of sin for a season; no more to do with the prince of the power of the air, but to declare war against sin, and the kingdom of darkness. What have I to do, to have any confidence in any

other but in the Lord JEHOVAH alone, the God of Israel, to put my confidence under the wings of the God of Israel, under which I am now come to live, I am now come to die, and am now come to spend an eternity? O, through grace, I am now made to say, I will trust under the wings of the God of Israel; in him will I bless myself, and in him will I glory. But we return to shew, that our vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts is a solemn part of religious worship; and it will appear, if we consider, that it is not only a swearing to the Lord; but,

4. It is a swearing by the Lord, a swearing by the great name of the Lord our God, as you have it in Jer. iv. 2. "And thou shalt swear the Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness: the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." Deut. vi. 13. and x. 20. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God: him shalt thou serve; and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." It is then a swearing the LORD LIVETH; a swearing by the LIVING and TRUE GOD, in opposition to all idols and false gods. It is a swearing by the name of the Lord our God. Thus it is a most solemn declaration of our faith of his being and existence, and a solemn appeal to his omniscience, as to the sincerity of our resolutions and purposes, so far as we can know our own treacherous hearts; and a calling upon his holiness and justice, to avenge perfidious and treacherous dealing in his covenant. The connection is remarkable: "Thou shalt swear the Lord LIVETH, and the nations shall bless themselves in him." That is, when strangers to Christ are witnesses to the solemnity, and to the appearing seriousness in which you swear by the Lord, and observe how circumspectly you walk, in an agreeableness to the impressions you profess to have

on your spirits, of the infinite majesty, holiness, and grace of God, it will provoke and encourage them to ask the way to Zion, to use the means of acquaintance with Christ; and having met with him in his word of grace, the nations will bless themselves in him, and place all their happiness in his favour, and glory in his righteousness alone. They will bless the Lord they ever heard of Christ, and of the way of salvation through him. They will place all their confidence in him. They will glory in him; in what he has done; in what he is doing; in what he has promised to do, and really will do, for the ends of his glory, and for their good, in time and to eternity. So much for a hint at the first thing proposed on this head, which was to speak a little of the nature of our *swearing* to the Lord of hosts.

WE should now proceed to the *second* thing upon this head, namely, To consider the matter of this bond, and oath before us. But, before we enter on this, we shall, first, lay down two or three remarks, for our instruction. And,

I. WE remark, that a personal covenant, and this solemn oath and covenant, that we are to enter into, jointly and together, are of one and the same kind and nature; only, whereas in a personal covenant, there is but one person that vows and swears to the Lord; but in this there are many persons joining together about the same part of religious worship. The parties joining in this vow and oath, are just all in this land, or the neighbouring lands, who have been helped, by grace, to take hold of God's covenant of promise, and, in his strength, are resolved to cleave to the whole of his truths, even to such truths, as are reckoned, by some, to be of small consequence; all such as buy the truth at any rate, and resolve to

sell it at no rate ; and such as will not give up with the order and government of Christ's house, and are willing to bind themselves to these duties by the oath of God. A personal covenant then is between the LORD and one *single person*, transacted in a most secret manner : but here there may be many, and it is to be lamented, that so few are disposed for this work at this day. It is to 'be wished, that such as desire to own the cause of Christ, may offer themselves willingly to this work. As two are better than one, so the more of the owners of Christ's cause that shall be directed to join in this solemn work, it will make the more public the confession of his name ; and may be a mean of strengthening one another's hands, in witnessing for his truth and cause at this day, when so many care for none of these things.

2. WE remark, that as personal covenanting and national covenanting are much of the same nature and kind, only different in some circumstances, the one being done in secret, the other in public ; so we remark, that covenanting, in its nature, and in the nature of things, goes, in a due order, before communicating and sitting down at the table of the LORD. Personal covenanting must go along with our vowing at his table. We are to examine ourselves ; and so to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. And as examination is necessary, so our renewing our engagements to be the Lord's, ought likewise to precede the other ; because, in sitting down at the Lord's table, we take the seal of his covenant ; and if we be not in covenant with him, our joining in the solemn ordinance of his supper is nothing more than sealing of a blank. Thus, I say, there is at least a necessity for personal covenanting preceding communicating ; and now Providence has opened a door for

renewing our solemn national vows; for our saying, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." Come, and let us cleave to him, and avouch him as our God before the world. Let us confess his name before the world, in a day when it is so openly denied, "Let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and there he will teach us of his ways." It may be very desirable, if the Lord prepare the hearts of his people to himself, and take away the iniquity that stands between him and us, that our public vowing go along with our public communicating.

3. WE remark, That, as to our entering into this bond of the covenant, there are many difficulties in our way; and, because of all these, we have need to seek to the Lord in the actings of faith, in the duty of fasting and humiliation, that he may teach us a right way. We are in danger of rash approaching, on the one hand; and we are in danger of slackness and remissness, and of neglecting present duty, on the other. By our slackness, we may come to lose the season of this duty. Every thing is beautiful in its season; and certainly this duty must also be beautiful in its own season. We are in danger of being involved in difficulties, and therefore we need to look to the Lord, to shew us his way, as we find Ezra did at the river Ahava; as we may see in the eighth chapter of his book, and twenty-first verse. At that time there were few of the sons of Levi, who ought to have been most forward in this work, of going up to Jerusalem to repair the house of the Lord, and therefore he sent for ministers, as in the 17th verse. How much is this the case with us? At this day, there are few of the sons of Levi, few ministers, to own this solemn work of renewing our co-

venants with the Lord. But, alas! some of them, who once appeared zealous for his cause, are now opening their mouths, in the most reviling way and manner, against the same, and endeavour to palliate the defections of the day; to hide their own shame, in not coming out to the help of the Lord against the mighty. You see then what course Ezra took in the 21st verse: "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." We are then to mint, in his strength, to fast before the Lord our God, and to enquire of him a right way for ourselves at this day. You see Ezra was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen, to help him against the enemy in the way, because they had said to the king, "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." Vers. 22. "So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he was intreated of us." We are then to take the course that Ezra was directed to take, which was better to him, and may be so, by God's blessings, to us, than though he or we had many bands of soldiers. What then is the end and design of the fast? Why, It is to enquire of the Lord a right way for ourselves, in a day of so many difficulties. 1. It is to see that our help or sufficiency is noway in ourselves, for this great and solemn work which we have in view. Our help to prepare for it is not in ourselves, no more than Ezra's, who knew not how to be carried through so many enemies and obstructions in his way. And are we not ready to be turned aside, either by rashness on the one hand, or remissness on the other. Thus we must wholly distrust ourselves, and see that all

furniture, strength, righteousness, and salvation, is with him: "For the hand of our God is on all that seek him for good." His strengthening hand, his healing hand, his helping hand, his encouraging hand, his through-bearing hand, is upon all that seek him for good; upon all that seek him as their Rest, that seek him as their ALL, that seek him in Christ, where only he is to be found. 2. It is to have some stayed thoughts, what we are, that are the parties, who are to join in that solemn bond. Why! You see who they are in the preamble of that bond: "We, all and every one of us, though sensible of the deceitfulness of our own hearts."—We have deceitful hearts all of us; and the parties who may join in this work, are such as have deceitful hearts, and are sensible that their hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and therefore need vows and covenants, bonds of God's appointment, in an evangelical way, to be made use of, to bind them faster to the Lord. And what need have we of the Spirit of faith, and of gospel-humiliation, that we may lie in the dust before the Lord, in a sense of the corruption of our natures, and of the deceitfulness of our hearts! But then, 3. Our fasting and afflicting ourselves, imply our acting faith upon God's promise of finding our way. We have been covenant-breakers, and so lost our way, and have dealt very treacherously with our God. Our way is very dark and difficult, if we consider that we are sinners in the first Adam, and, by our unbelief, have rejected precious Christ, the second Adam, the LORD from HEAVEN. Innumerable personal evils compass us about; and we have our hand deeply dipped in all the provocations of the day and time wherein we live. We are the men and women that have sinned against the Lord God of Israel; with us are found many and

great transgressions against the Lord our God. "We with our fathers have sinned: we have been too long the workers of iniquity." Let us look back then to what we are by nature, and to what we have done, by our sins of heart and life, in thought, word, and action; by all which we have been drawing down the Lord's righteous anger and displeasure upon ourselves, and these lands. But, we say, our fasting and afflicting ourselves, imply the acting of faith upon God's promise of finding our way. Why! Where is the promise then of guiding us in the right way? We may see it in Jer. l. 4. 5. "In those days the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together: they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward," &c. Here it is promised of Israel and Judah, "They shall come;" whatever obstructions may be in the way, "They shall come, saith the Lord." What obstructions may be in the way of the on-going of this covenanting-work of reformation, we cannot tell; but we hope the time will come, when Israel and Judah, Scotland, and other nations joining with her, shall come, asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward. For this end, let it be our concern to behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, that he may take away our sins, and the sins of these lands, as in one day; and bring us to join ourselves unto the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten. So much for the remarks.

We now proceed, by divine assistance, to speak of the matter of the oath and bond under consideration; and this bond contains nothing but what is laid down in the word of God; and therefore the matter of it is morally binding upon each of our con-

sciences, whether we explicitly enter into it or not. This we shall endeavour to shew as we go along, and as the Lord assisteth.

THE BOND may be divided into three parts. 1. The *preface* or *preamble* of the bond. 2. The *explicit matter* of the bond. 3. The *conclusion* of the bond. Of each of these we shall endeavour to speak a little, for explication. And,

First, THE preface or preamble of the BOND, which runs in these words: "We, all and every one of us, " though sensible of the unbelief and deceitfulness of " our own hearts, and however frequently perplexed " with doubts and fears anent our actual believing; " yet desiring to essay, in the Lord's strength, and " in obedience to his command, to glorify God, " by believing his word of grace, contained in his " covenant of promise; and, in the faith of his pro- " mise, to devote ourselves unto the Lord in a cove- " nant of duty."

Now, in this *preface*, we may notice, 1. The parties entering into this bond and covenant: "We, " all and every one of us." 2. Their character. (1.) They are no other than sinful men and women, who have fallen in the first Adam, and who have deceitful and unbelieving hearts. (2.) They are such as, in some measure, are sensible of the deceitfulness and unbelief of their own hearts. (3.) They are such as may have doubts about their actual believing. (4.) They are such as desire to essay to glorify God; [1.] By believing his word of grace, contained in his covenant of promise; [2.] They desire, in the faith of his promise, to devote themselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty; and, [3.] We may notice the

way and manner they are essaying all this: Why? It is in the Lord's strength, and in obedience to his command. But then,

Second, As we have the preface, so we have the *explicit matter* of the *nonp*, which we proposed also to explain a little. The bond, as to the explicit matter of it, may be again divided into two parts. 1. There is in it a solemn declaration and profession of our essaying, through grace, "to take hold of God's gracious covenant by faith, as the same is revealed to us in the glorious gospel." But, 2. In this explicit matter of the bond, there is likewise a solemn oath and promise, in which we, in the strength of grace, devote ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty, solemnly promising and swearing, that we, "in the strength of his promised grace, shall walk in his ways, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice." Of each of these in order. And,

1. WE are to make a solemn declaration and profession of our essaying, through grace, to take hold, by faith, of God's gracious covenant, revealed to us in the glorious gospel. And here we shall notice some things for clearing this matter.

(1.) WE have the *solemnity* of this declaration and profession of our faith in God's covenant of promise; and this is expressed in the following words: "We do, with our hands lifted up to the Most High God, hereby profess, and before God, angels, and men, solemnly declare, that, through the grace of God, and according to the measure of his grace given unto us, we do, with our whole hearts, take hold of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the only propitiation for our sins; his righteousness, as the only

“ foundation of our access to, and acceptance with
 “ God; his covenant of free and rich promises, as
 “ our only charter for the heavenly inheritance; his
 “ word, for our perfect and only rule of faith and
 “ practice; his Spirit, for our alone guide, to lead
 “ us into all truth revealed in his holy word; unto
 “ which nothing, at any time, is to be added, whe-
 “ ther by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions
 “ of men. We avouch the Lord to be our Go!,” &c.
 Now, we have, in this solemn declaration and pro-
 fession, the solemnity of it pointed out to us, in that
 it is made with our hands lifted up to the Most High
 God; with hands lifted up, and therefore with the
 solemnity of an oath; for the Angel of the covenant,
 Rev. x. who appears “ clothed with a cloud, and ha-
 “ ving a rainbow upon his head, whose face is as the
 “ sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, he lifted up his
 “ hand to heaven, when he did swear by him that li-
 “ veth for ever and ever.” And the lifting up of our
 hands, is an expression of the lifting up of our souls
 to the Most High God, in the acts of faith, love,
 obedience, reverence, and godly fear.

(2.) We may notice the *witnesses*, before whom the
 solemn declaration and profession is made. It is before
 God, angels, and men. Before God! who is the search-
 er of hearts, and who is graciously present among the
 worshipping assemblies of his people. Before angels!
 who attend the worshipping assemblies of the church,
 and observe our behaviour and deportment, as we see
 in 1 Cor. xi. 10. “ For this cause ought the woman
 “ to have power on her head, because of the angels;”
 that is, the woman’s head ought to be covered in
 worshipping assemblies, because some of the angels
 are ordinarily present in them, and observe the de-
 cent attire and behaviour of gospel-worshippers. And

it is also before men, because we are all witnesses one against another, of the solemn engagements we come under. (3.) We may notice the object of our worship, to whom this solemn declaration and profession is made. Why! It is to the Most High God, the only living and true God, the sole Object of all religious worship and adoration. (4.) We may notice the matter of this solemn declaration and profession. And, [1.] We solemnly profess, that, through grace, we believe in the Son of God, and take hold of him in his person and offices. [2.] That, through Jesus Christ, we avouch the Lord to be our God. (5.) We may notice the manner of this solemn declaration and profession; and it is to be done in the gospel-method and manner, namely, through grace, and according to the measure of the grace of God given unto us. It is not to be done in our own strength, but in the strength of grace, and according to the measure of grace given to us, according to the measure of grace we have been helped to receive, out of the fulness of grace that is in Christ, the gracious Head of the new covenant; to set about this solemn work otherwise, were to do it not in a gospel-manner.

BUT that we may discourse a little farther concerning this solemn declaration and profession, we shall endeavour, by the Lord's assistance, 1. To shew that it was the practice of the Lord's people, in entering into a covenant of duty, to profess their faith in God's covenant of promise, and to avouch the Lord, through Jesus Christ, to be their God. 2. Explain more particularly the matter contained in this solemn declaration and profession.

First, We proceed to the first of these, namely, To

shew that it was the practice of the Lord's people, in entering into a covenant of duty, to profess their faith in God's covenant of promise, and to avouch the Lord, through Jesus Christ, for their God. We see this goes first in order, if we are helped to manage it in a gospel-way and manner. And this will appear, if we consider some of the covenants that the church and people of God entered into, as we may see, 2 Chron. xv. 12. where we have an account of the covenant they entered into in the days of Asa. "And they entered into a covenant, to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart." By this *seeking of the Lord*, you are to understand the whole of religious worship and duty. The covenant of duty they entered into, was to seek the Lord with all their heart; to seek him in Christ; to seek him, according to the revelation he had made of himself, in the covenant he had made with his eternal Son, before the beginning of all ages. You see the object of their worship was the *Lord God of Israel*; they were to act faith upon him, as the God of Israel, as the Lord God of their fathers. And how was he the Lord God of their fathers, but in the covenant he made with Abraham? Which covenant was expressed to this purpose: "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. I am God Almighty: Walk before me, and be thou perfect." In consequence of this, JEHOVAH takes that name to himself, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Thus our LORD JESUS proved the resurrection of the dead against the Sadducees: "Have ye not heard that it is written, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The children of believers are called the children of the faith of Abraham.

Thus the very first article of this covenant of duty, made in Asa's time, was just a profession of their acting faith upon God, as the God of their fathers. See also 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. "And the king stood
"in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord,
"to walk after the Lord, and to keep his command-
"ments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with
"all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the
"words of the covenant which are written in this
"book." Vers. 32. "And he caused all that were
"present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it;
"and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to
"the covenant of God, the God of their fathers."
Why! This covenant was made with the Lord their God; and the very leading article in it, was their faith in him, as the Lord their God. And in like manner we have it in the book of Ezra: that covenant that was made in the time of Ezra was to the same purpose, as we may see in the 10th chapter of his book. "Now therefore let us make a cove-
"nant with our God, to put away all the wives,
"and such as are born of them, according to the
"counsel of my Lord, and of such as tremble at
"the commandment of our God. Now therefore
"let us make a covenant with our God." The covenant of grace was, in the substance of it, published at Sinai, in these words: "I am the Lord thy
"God, which brought thee out of the land of E-
"gypt, and out of the house of bondage." This was the leading article of this covenant of duty which was made in the days of Ezra; namely, to lay hold on God's covenant made with Christ, to take or acknowledge God, as their God in Christ. They were to act faith on him, as the Lord their God. He gave us out the law at mount Sinai, just as it were ingrafted

upon gospel-grace, that we might walk in the strength of his grace, in doing his commandments. To the same purpose you may see, Neh. x. 28. 29. and Psal. lxxvi. 11. "Vow, and pay to the Lord your God; let all that be round about him, bring presents to him that ought to be feared." We can never vow aright, unless we act faith upon the Lord as our God; and we will never pay our vows, unless we act faith upon him as our God. Vow to the Lord your God, and pay. So we see that the church and people of God, in renewing their covenants, had it for their practice to act faith upon God's covenant of promise, and to avouch the Lord, through Jesus Christ, to be their God; and so it is expressed in the bond under consideration: "We do, in the strength of grace, and according to the measure of grace given unto us, take hold of the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Some may mistake these expressions, and think them strong, and that they point forth, that none are to enter into this bond, as it is laid, except they have assurance of their being in a state of grace. But it may be considered,

1. That, when the preface of the bond is compared with the declaration, it will appear that doubting Christians may join in this solemn work; for the parties entering into this bond, are such who have deceitful unbelieving hearts, who are sensible of the deceitfulness and unbelief of their hearts, and who frequently have doubts and fears anent their actual believing; yet they desire to essay to glorify God by believing; and it cannot be questioned, but it is our duty to essay to believe in the strength of grace, and according to the measure of God's grace given us.
2. It must be considered, that we can essay no duty but in the strength of grace, and according to the measure of grace given unto us. If we sit down at

the table of the Lord, we must essay, in the strength of grace, to take hold of Christ; and we must do it according to the measure of grace given to us; for there is a particular application in faith; and we must do it according to the measure of grace given to us, though it be small like a grain of mustard-seed, like the smoking flax, even so small, that perhaps it is, for ordinary, out of sight with us whether we have any grace at all; yet it must be according to the measure of grace we have received, and not what others have received, because there is a particular application in faith; and so we must believe for ourselves, and none other can believe for us. 3. It must be considered, that the design of this solemn-declaration, is not to declare that we have actually believed, which is clear, as I have shewn, from comparing the preface and declaration together; but it is to make an essay at actual believing, which cannot miss to be our duty. And those who are in doubts anent their actual believing, may and ought to essay actual believing; and in our essay at believing we are to express our faith, and not to hamper the expressions of our faith with expressions of our unbelief. 4. We find the Old-Testament church expressing their faith in going about this duty, as is clear from the scriptures we have noticed: and why should not the New-Testament church profess and express their faith in going about this duty? Ezra x. 2. "Now therefore let us make a covenant with the Lord our God." They could not acknowledge the Lord to be their God, but according to the measure of grace they had received, no more than we; and their avouching the Lord for their God, implies their taking hold of Christ by faith, in the strength of grace, and according to the measure of the grace of God which they had received; and so are we to essay the same duty,

in the strength of grace, as well as they did before us. By this you may see that these words are necessary in the bond; and it could not have been otherwise, if done in a gospel-way. We must go about this solemn duty in a way boding good at the hand of God, not in a doubting way. Whatever tossings we have with our unbelief, let us not bring it in, when we are to make a solemn profession of our faith in Christ; but let us set about this duty, boding well of his grace. We must not say, If we have grace, we take hold of Christ, and of the covenant made with him; if we have grace, we believe in Christ: that is just a mixing unbelief with our faith: this is no suitable form of speech to bring before God. How would a master take it off the hand of his servant, if, concerning his commandment, the servant should say, If I obey you, I do obey? We must not say, If we have already believed, we take hold of God's covenant of grace, and devote ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty; but that we desire, in the strength of grace, to glorify God, by present believing his word of grace. We never owed so much to unbelief, as to foster it in the solemn profession of our faith.

HAVING thus shewn you, that it was the practice of the Lord's people, in entering into a covenant of duty, to profess their faith in God's covenant of promise, and to avouch the Lord, through Christ, to be their God, we proceed,

SECONDLY, By divine assistance, to explain more particularly the *matter* contained in this solemn declaration and profession of our faith, in which, by a solemn oath and promise, we devote ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty. We tell you there is not one word in it, but what is contained in the

word of God ; and therefore we, with confidence, open it up unto you.

In this solemn promise and engagement to duty, we may notice then, 1. The solemnity of the engagement. We promise and swear, by the great name of the Lord our God, according to the example of the Lord's people recorded in the scripture, who came under an engagement to be the Lord's by a solemn oath, Psal. cxix. 106. " I have sworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

2. A PROFESSION of faith in the Lord ; for we swear by the great name of the Lord our God ; and his name is a great name ; it is wonderful, and unspeakable by all created beings ; and we are to make mention of his name, at all times, with holy awe and reverence, especially in swearing by his name. We say there is, in the matter of this solemn declaration and profession, a present profession of faith in the Lord as our God. And here we may notice, (1.) That faith takes along its helps and auxiliaries with it, in as much as the profession is made through the grace of God : and this answers to the commandment given by Paul to Timothy, " And thou, Timothy, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (2.) It says there is a deniedness to self, and grace received ; as if the person should say, O ! It is but a small measure of grace that I have received ; but this must be an exercise in the strength of Christ, and in a dependence upon the fulness of grace that is in him. And this expression, " In the strength of Christ, and according to the measure of grace received," implies in it faith's persuasion, that there is a fulness of grace, in Christ the Fountain of grace, to carry us through this duty, and a concern that every grain of grace re-

ceived, may be in exercise in this duty of lifting up the hand to the Most High God. (3.) It says, There is a mint at a present taking hold of the person of Christ. We do, in the strength of grace, take hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the alone propitiation for our sins. We take hold of his person; faith receives him in his person, John i. 14. "The Word" "was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory." All things were made by him who is the Word, and yet the Word was made flesh. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The word, in the first language, signifies, "We" "did take a stayed and fixed view of the glory of" "Christ;" and those who beheld his glory, were the same persons of whom it is said, "That they received Christ, and believed on his name," vers. 12.; so that faith is a present believing. There must then be a believing in the present time; and this ought to be a believing time with us. "Behold, now is the" "accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." But our believing in the present time, does not say that we believe with present comfort, sense, or feeling. No; there may be a believing, and yet a doubting; strong faith, and yet strong unbelief; as you read of Heman in the 77th Psalm. He had strong doubts, and yet strong faith. There is, I say, a present mint at taking hold of the person of Christ. It is a scripture-expression, to *take hold*: Let a man "take hold of my strength, that he may make peace" "with me, and he shall make peace with me." Let him take hold of my strength; that is, my eternal Son, the horn of salvation, raised up in the house of David. Faith is a taking hold of Christ in his person; for we take hold of him, as the true God and eternal life; we take hold of the Lord Jesus

Christ. Christ is called the *Lord*, which is the rendering of **JEHOVAH** in the Old Testament. Why then, we take hold of **JEHOVAH**, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the true God and eternal life, as he is Lord of all, and as our Lord and our God. This was the way that Thomas acted faith upon him. Thomas answered and said, "My Lord, and my God." We take hold of him as our Lord and King, to rule over us, to subdue sin in us, and to subdue our hearts to himself; as our Lord, to rule us by his word and Spirit, to defend and protect us by his almighty power; as the Captain of the Lord's host, that is mighty to save. We take hold of him, whose name alone is **JEHOVAH**, the Most High over all the earth. Who have more need to take hold of him than we, to save us from the guilt, from the filth, and from the power of sin? We take hold of the Lord Jesus, who hath said, "I will save you from all your uncleanness." We take hold of a whole Christ, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, as well as Jesus, and as Lord. *Christ* is a Greek word, and signifies the Messiah, the Anointed. We take hold of God's Anointed; of him, whom God has anointed as Mediator of the new covenant, and to whom, as such, he has given the holy Spirit without measure. He was anointed to a threefold office; anointed to be our Prophet, to teach us; our Priest, to satisfy justice for us, and to reconcile us to God; and, as our King, to subdue us to himself, and to rule us by his word and Spirit.

BUT then we take hold of him, [1.] As the only propitiation for our sins, as we have it, Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this

"time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and
 "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
 We invite you, then, this day, to take hold of him,
 as the propitiation for your sins. "We are justified
 freely by his grace," saith the apostle Paul
 to the Romans. How came you by redemption?
 might one have said. Why! saith he, through
 Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propi-
 tiation for the sins of sinful men of Adam's family;
 and for me, Paul, as well as others, who myself was
 a blasphemer; but through his propitiation I obtained
 mercy. Here is a call and summons to every con-
 science here to believe in Jesus. We call you, in his
 name, to believe in Jesus, and that with a particular
 application to your own souls. To whom is he set
 forth to be a propitiation? Why! It is just to the
 guilty sinner, the law-condemned sinner. And we
 warn you, O sinner, that if you be a final rejecter of
 this propitiation, to hell you must go; for otherwise
 God would not be just, and the justifier of them that
 believe in Jesus. There is no way of being accepted
 with God, but this way, by this propitiation that
 God hath set forth. And we make intimation to
 the vilest sinner in all this company, there is help in
 God for you, through this propitiation. If thy con-
 science is awakened, you will perhaps think there is
 no mercy with God for you. Are you then saying,
 There is no help in God for me, who have run away
 all my days from God? Why! poor sinner, we tell
 you there is mercy with him for you, though never
 so miserable; for he is just, and the justifier of them
 which believe in Jesus. He is just, but yet the ju-
 stifier of all such as believe in Jesus, as do venture up-
 on this propitiation. Venture, then, on Emmanuel,
 God with us.

[2.] As we are to take hold of him, as the only propitiation for our sins, so we profess here to take hold of his righteousness, as the only foundation of our access to, and acceptance with God. This also is scripture-language, Heb. x. 19. "Having therefore; brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." O! Here is the way of access to, and acceptance with God! "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way;" namely, by the way of his eternal righteousness, which he hath fulfilled for us, let us draw near. You may all draw near to God in this way; he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, who fulfilled all righteousness, and for his righteousness sake is he well-pleased. O! Then you are called to take hold of him, as the Lord your righteousness; for this is the name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; and you never give him his name, O sinner, till you call him, "The Lord my righteousness. Surely, in the Lord, shall one say, have I righteousness and strength."

[3.] Here we are to take hold of his covenant of free and rich promises, as our only charter for the heavenly inheritance. This also is scripture-language, Is. lvi. 6. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant." Then, you see, the

sons of the stranger are warranted to take hold of God's covenant: "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39. "Then said Peter, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Verf. 38. "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Now, what is the promise? Why! It is just the charter of the covenant, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people:" I will be your God, reconciled through my eternal Son, and you shall be my people, accepted by me through him. The promise is to you, to you, O sinner! Will you let the promise slip then? The promise is to you and to your children; it is spoken to you, it is given to you, and therefore must be received by you, and believed by you: "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

[4.] We are to take his word as our perfect and only rule of faith and practice. This is also scripture-stile, and what we are called to, Is. viii. 20. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which, saith the apostle, "We do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place." It is more sure, than that vision which the apostles had, from the excellent glory when they were with Christ on the holy mount, 2 Pet. i. 17. 18. 19. It is a perfect rule; "The law of the Lord is perfect." It is an unnerving rule; therefore saith the Psalmist, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes, then shall I not be ashamed when I have a respect to all thy commandments."

[5.] WE are to take his Spirit for our alone guide, to lead us into all truth. This much is promised of him by our Lord, John xiv. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And John xvi. 13. "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." We are then to depend on him for guiding in all things, to help us faithfully to bear witness for Christ in our day and generation. We are to take him for our remembrancer, to bring all things to our remembrance.

BUT, then, as it contains a profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; so our swearing by the great name of the Lord our God, contains also a profession of our faith in God, through Jesus Christ, as our God. Therefore it is said, "We avouch the Lord to be our God." And this also is what we are warranted to do, and called to do. We are warranted, if we consider it was the cry of Christ, as our public Head, Psal. lxxxix. 26. "He shall cry unto me, 'Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.'" If it was his cry as a Head, then all of us may say it over through him, as his members. We are called, as well as warranted, to avouch the Lord to be our God, Jer. iii. 4. 19. compared. "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, 'My Father? And I said, 'Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.'" The Lord Jesus Christ, as the new-covenant Head, has acquired a new right to God, as his God and your God; therefore he saith to Mary, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." We are then to put in our claim and title,

in Christ's right, to God, as our Father and our God: we are to avouch the Lord to be our God. O! we call you, first, to chuse him to be your God and portion. "Thou art my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in thee." Psal. xvi. 5. 6. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." These are the words of the new-covenant Head immediately; and we are to put in our note with him, and say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." O put in your note! What will be your last words? Will you not say, The Lord shall be my God. "Thus saith the Lord, I will be your God." And what saith saith, "The Lord shall be my God." O say it young people! This was the language of Jacob, in his young days, at Bethel, "The Lord shall be my God." O! It is good language for you that are young people, "The Lord shall be my God." Look to him to help you to say it. When alone, Jacob said it, when alone at Bethel. O say it, old people, "The Lord shall be my God." Will you resolve that nothing shall ease or please you but himself? "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" O let every one here say, "The Lord shall be my God;" for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation."

BUT then, in the matter contained in this solemn declaration and profession of our faith, in which we, by a solemn oath and promise, devote ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty, we have not only the

solemnity of the engagement, and a solemn profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the manner we have been hearing, and in God through him, as our God. But then,

3. THE matter of our solemn vow and engagement, that we vow and swear unto, namely, "That we shall walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice." This is what we are all bound to by the moral law: and it has been the practice of the saints, in scripture, to bind themselves to these things, Psal. exix. 57. "Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said that I will keep thy words." Vers. 106. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." There cannot be better work for us, than that we walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice. We are to hearken to his voice in the law; we are to hearken to it in the gospel, to believe in his Son Jesus Christ: "For this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ."

BUT more particularly, in the matter of our solemn vow and engagement to duty, we promise and swear, 1. "That we shall, by the Lord's grace, continue and abide in the profession, faith, and obedience of the true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, Presbyterial church-government, and discipline, of the house of God, laid down in his word, contained in our standards, and sworn to in our solemn covenants." A summary of the doctrine is contained in our Confession of Faith. Some view we have of our worship, in the Directory for Worship. Our discipline is somewhat pointed out in the books of discipline, and in our acts of assembly in reforming

times: but we do not formally swear either to the books of discipline, or the acts of assembly, in the most reforming periods, but to the substance of Presbyterian discipline, as laid out in them, and to these branches of discipline in them, that are most agreeable to the word of God. For you may observe, that neither the books of discipline, nor the acts of assembly, in reforming periods, are expressly mentioned in the bond. And as it is our duty, from the word, to contend for "the faith once delivered to the saints," and to strive together for the faith of the gospel; so you may observe, that, through the whole bond, the word of God is the primary rule, as it ought to be. Thus you see that there is no ground to object, that, by swearing to the discipline, we become engaged to support what is defective as to the discipline, in the books of discipline, or in the acts of assembly. And as to Presbyterian church-government, you have a view of it in the Form of church-government, which is printed along with the Confession of Faith. Now, here is nothing but what is our duty, and what we are bound unto, whether we enter into this bond or not. Is it not his commandment to all, "Buy the truth, and sell it not?" To buy it at any rate, and sell it at no rate? Is it not the duty of the church of Christ to strive together for the faith of the gospel? So we are bound, by the second commandment of the moral law, to preserve all Christ's ordinances and institutions pure and entire, whether as to worship, discipline, or government, in our several places and stations; and convey them to posterity, that race unto race may shew his mighty deeds.

BUT then, under this article of the bond, we renounce, and promise, by the Lord's grace, to "contend and testify against all contrary evils, errors, and corruptions; particularly *Papery*," which is

opened up to you, in most of its branches and corruptions, in our national covenant, which you have along with the bond, in which we renew the same.

We promise also to contend against *Prelacy*, which, as to corruption in government, and superstition in worship, is much allied to Popery: for, as their worship is corrupted by a great variety of superstitious rites and ceremonies, so likewise their government is entirely antisciptural, seeing they invest their bishops and prelates (which are creatures merely of human invention) with the sole power of ordination and jurisdiction, and, upon the matter, derive their whole ecclesiastical powers from the *Eraastian* supremacy of the civil magistrate; which is such an *Eraastian* way and manner of government, as is destructive of the beautiful order of Christ's house.

We likewise renounce *Deism*, which is a principle prevailing with many at this day; who deny the scriptures to be the word of God, and pretend, that natural religion is sufficient to guide men to happiness, and revealed religion is not necessary.

We likewise renounce *Arianism*, which is that gross heresy, denying the proper, true, and supreme Deity of the Son of God, and of the Holy Ghost.

We also renounce *Arminianism*, which is a system containing many gross errors; such as, notwithstanding of the fall, man retains a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good: that the grace of God is not irresistible and efficacious of itself: that believers in Christ may fall totally and finally away from a state of grace: that election depends upon foreseen good works: and that Christ has merited grace so

all mankind. That the reason why some are chosen to salvation, and others rejected, is for the foreseen faith and good works of the one, and for the foreseen unbelief and evil works of the other; whereas JEHOVAH saith, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and whom he will, he hardeneth," Rom. ix. 11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Verſ. 13. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,"

AGAIN, we likewise renounce *Independency*, which is a denying the unity of the true catholic church of Christ, pretending that every single congregation has all power of jurisdiction and order within itself, so as noway to depend upon, and be subordinated and subjected to the authority of synods or assemblies, directly contrary to Acts xv. and other places of scripture; and by which means they divide the body of Christ, and open a door to all manner of abominations; and whatever errors fall in among them, they incapacitate themselves for purging out the same.

As also we renounce *Latitudinarian tenets*; that is, the prevailing opinion of this day, that communion is to be kept with all that hold, what they call, the Essentials of Christianity, whether they be Presbyterians, Prelatists, or Independents. That is to say, Presbyterian government, though the only government Christ has instituted in his house, may be given up with; and the decryers and betrayers of it are guilty of no scandal that ought to be purged, or that may mar their fellowship with the church of Christ. But if men once take the freedom to give

up with any of the institutions of Christ, with any of the truths of God, and are boldly adventuring to buy and sell the truths of Christ, concerning the order and government of his church, they bid very fair, in a short time, to pay little regard to what they call, the Essentials of Christianity; for, when the government and order of Christ's institution is once laid aside, every man is left at liberty to judge for himself what is essential to religion, and what not. They are called Latitudinarian tenets, because they give a latitude, a toleration, in effect, to every thing that private judgment sets up to be right; and because these principles, overthrowing the divine right of Presbyterianial government, do thereby bury the public judgments of the courts of Christ, and because the terms of communion that seem to be gone into by such a set of men, are wider, and of a greater latitude, than those which Christ himself has laid down in his word, by which means a door is set open to Satan to sow his tares, every thing is cast loose, and God is provoked to give up such people to strong delusions, to believe a lie: as is the case of the men of these principles in the day wherein we live. But then,

2. In like manner, we promise and swear, "That
" by all means, which are lawful and warrantable for
" us, according to the word of God, we shall, in
" our several stations and callings, endeavour the
" reformation of religion in England and Ireland,
" in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government,
" according to the word of God; and to promote
" our covenanted uniformity in religion, Confession
" of Faith, and Catechisms, Form of church-govern-
" ment, and Directory for worship, as they were
" received by the church of Scotland."

THIS is the substance of the Solemn League and Covenant, sworn both by Scotland and England, about an hundred years ago. It was a lawful and laudable association of these kingdoms, for promoting true religion; for preferring the glory of God, the increase of Christ's kingdom, to all things in the world, and subordinating all things thereto, and to the will of God revealed in his word. It was a professed subjection of the three nations to Christ, in their swearing allegiance to Zion's King; and was in some measure the fulfilling of that prophecy, Hos. i. 11. "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel appoint themselves one Head;" and of that, Jer. l. 4. 5. Now, this oath and vow being so lawful, laudable, and warrantable, it is certainly binding on us, whether we come under it, in our own persons, or not, as much as the oath made by Joshua, and the princes of the congregation of Israel, to the Gibeonites, was binding upon their posterity. And that the oath made to the Gibeonites was binding on posterity, is clear from the famine sent in the days of David, for the sin of Saul, in slaying some of the Gibeonites, although that oath had been sworn to the Gibeonites some hundred of years before the violation of it by that bloody action of Saul: and the anger of the Lord was not turned away in that judgment of famine, till seven sons of Saul were hanged up before the sun. And we have reason to fear, that the Lord will, in as awful and evident a manner, avenge the quarrel of his broken covenant in the isles of the sea; and that the judgment, as in the instance now hinted at, will fall heavily, and in a remarkable way and manner, upon the ring-leaders, in the defection and apostasy of these times, though the best may have some share in the stroke, seeing all are involved in the sin of the day.

g. In the same manner, we promise and swear, by the great name of the Lord our God, "That we shall, in our several places and callings, encourage and strengthen one another's hands, in pursuing the end of our oath and covenant; and that we shall endeavour a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ; and that, in our personal callings and particular families, we shall study to be good examples to one another of godliness and righteousness, and of every duty we owe to God and man; and that we shall not give up ourselves to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the cause of God; but, denying ourselves, and our own things, we shall, above all things, seek the honour of God, and the good of his cause and people; and that, through grace, forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidences, we shall endeavour to depend upon the Lord, to walk by the rule of his word, and to hearken to his voice by his servants."

Now, these things are our duty, whether we come under this oath or not. Being moral duties, they are of perpetual obligation, as we have shewn you already. And that these are moral duties, is evident and plain: for to strengthen one another's hands, in promoting the honour of God, and the good of his cause and people, is a duty binding upon us, both by the first and second tables of the moral law. And that we should depend upon the Lord alone, chiefly aim at his glory, and the advancing and promoting of his kingdom, and study to have a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, is clear from the whole Bible, the Old and new Testament, where we are taught to trust in God alone, to love him with a superlative love, to esteem him above all things, and to

subordinate all our concerns to his glory and honour ; and that, “ denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, “ we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this “ present world,” Tit. ii. 12. “ That we shall not “ give up ourselves to a detestable indifferency or “ neutrality in the cause of God,” is what we are all bound to already ; because we are under the oath of God, as we have shewn you, whether we explicitly swear this solemn bond or not. A great many, both ministers and professors, are, at this day, giving up themselves to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the cause of God, and yet, in the mean time, professing a great concern and zeal for the glory of God. Whether their ends be single or not, we leave it between God and their own consciences, as they shall answer to him at the great day of accounts, when every secret thing shall be brought to light. But then,

4. As we have the matter of this solemn oath, and as we have the solemn profession of our faith in it, so we are to notice the expression of our faith and dependence upon God’s covenant of promise, in our entering into this covenant of duty ; namely, “ These “ things we promise and engage to, in the strength “ of the promised grace of the LORD OUR “ GOD :” so that this solemn duty is not at all to be performed by us in our own strength, but in the strength of the grace of the Lord our God, and in the faith of God’s covenant of promise. We desire to believe in God, through his Son Jesus Christ, and to take him with us in every duty, and to go about this solemn work, in a dependence upon that grace that is in Christ Jesus, who is full of grace and truth, and who has a fulness of grace, suitable grace, seasonable grace, grace to help us in every time of need.

We promise nothing in our own strength, but in the strength of the grace that is in him for us. It is in the strength of that grace that is in the promise, and is in the covenant of promise, that we are to proceed in this work; and we are called and warranted to believe, that he will be forthcoming to us in making our vows, and in performing the same.

Third. THE last thing we took notice of in the bond, was the *conclusion* of it, in these words: "In all which, professing our own weakness, we earnestly pray to God, who is the Father of mercies, through his Son Jesus Christ, to be merciful unto us, and to enable us, by the power of his Holy Spirit, that we may do our duty, unto the praise of his grace in the churches. Amen."

THIS conclusion is a prayer which every one of us have need to be putting up to God. We are called to pray without ceasing; to pray with all supplication in the Spirit; to pray to God, as our God and Father, in Christ's right; to pray in faith, which eyes God in Christ; to put up the prayer of faith for his mercy, that he would be merciful to us. O! nothing will do us good but his mercy. "O! satisfy us early with thy mercy." Nothing will carry us through but his mercy. The covenant of grace is the sure mercies of David. We are then to look to him for mercy, for pardoning mercy, for strengthening mercy, for supporting mercy, and for through-bearing mercy. We are to pray in the Spirit for mercy. The Holy Spirit is in the church, thus to enable us to perform duty; we are then to walk in the Spirit, to believe in the Holy Ghost, and to depend on the Spirit, that, by him, we may be enabled.

to perform our duty, to the praise of his grace in the churches. Amen.

So much for the second thing on this third head, which was to consider the matter of the oath and bond under consideration. Before we proceed to speak of the manner in which we ought to enter into this bond, let us consider,

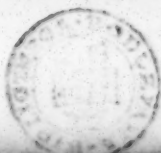
THAT as it is long since it was prophesied by Jacob, "That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh came, and to him should the gathering of the people be;" so this swearing to the Lord of hosts, supposes a coming to the Lord of hosts; a gathering to him by faith. He is the ensign set up to the nations; "To him shall the Gentiles seek;" and his rest is and shall be glorious. O! they have a good standing, who have, by grace, been enabled to take up their standing, for eternity, under the banner of the Captain of salvation! Their standing is so sure, that it will never be altered; and the glory of the grace of God is so much seen in the gathering to Shiloh, that it is for the glory of God, that they, who are gathered to him by grace, swear to him in a covenant of duty and gratitude; and so there is a command issued out from heaven, Psal. lxxvi. 11. "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God. Let all that be round about him, bring presents unto him that ought to be feared." Vowing to the Lord, then, is a duty that we are called unto, that we may renew our baptismal vows and engagements. But perhaps some of you hear these things with very little concern: you think you have little to do with this work: you think all this little or nothing to the purpose: but tell me, was it little to the purpose, or

nothing to the purpose, that you was baptized? I tell you, if you make not conscience of renewing your baptismal vows, you give up with your baptism; in short, you give up with the retinue of the Lamb on the mount Zion, and practically turn aside to the retinue of his enemies. "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him, bring presents to him that ought to be feared." All that be round about him, that is, all the gospel-church, all that hear this gospel. As all Israel were encamped round about the ark, so is the church, who, by profession, surround Christ, the New-Testament Ark: they are his retinue and followers. What way shall you prove that you are true men? When Joseph would try his brethren, they say, "We be true men." How would you make it appear that you are true men? Why! You must "bring presents to him that ought to be feared." Just bring yourselves to him: "Vow to the Lord your God, and pay." O! It is a very awful work to vow and swear to the Lord of hosts: but you see the very argument is, "He ought to be feared;" he ought to be had in reverence by all that be round about him. We lose the benefit of the word we read, and of the gospel we hear preached, two ways: 1. We are ready to forget that God is the Speaker. 2. We are ready to forget that we are the persons spoken to. But when we hear the word read and spoken to, we should endeavour to keep these two in mind; namely, that God is the Speaker, and that he is speaking to us in particular. And here you have a duty enjoined and commanded, and we are the very persons called to it; namely, "Vow and pay to the Lord your God;" and yet, I suppose, many will be putting it away from themselves; they will perhaps think it is the duty of some to vow and swear

to the Lord of hosts, but not their duty. But we tell you, it is your duty, whether you will believe it or not. There are some things duty immediately, and some mediately. There is a duty, that, in the order of nature, goes before vowing and swearing to the Lord, in a covenant of duty. What is that? Why! It is the duty of believing in the name of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our own fault we have not all believed in the Lord Jesus Christ already; and therefore it is the immediate duty of all who have not yet believed, now to believe, and, believing in the Lord, to swear to the Lord. It is the immediate duty of all who have believed in the name of the Son of God, to swear to the Lord of hosts: and it is the duty of all such as have not yet believed, to believe immediately, and without any further delay. We therefore call you immediately to believe in the name of the Son of God; and mind we deal with your consciences, we deal with immortal souls, with a view to our appearance before the awful tribunal of God, where you must give an account how you have received the word, as we must also account for it, how we have delivered the same unto you.

THIRDLY, We now proceed, by the Lord's assistance, to the *third* thing on this head; *namely*, To shew how, and after what manner we are to enter into this bond and solemn engagement. After what manner shall we then approach to the Lord in this awful and solemn work, of vowing and swearing to him?

I. THEN, we are to swear to the Lord of hosts believingly, and in faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God. We must have the faith of the command of God, that we have his command for



this piece of solemn religious worship, as we have formerly shewn you, from the practice of the church in Old-Testament times, as in the time of Nehemiah, Afa, and Josiah, when they did swear to the Lord of hosts. This was the practice of the church, Psal. cxix. 106. "I have sworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." You have an exprefs command for it, Psal. lxxvi. 11. "Vow to the Lord your God, and pay." And this was also the practice of the Macedonians; "They gave their ownelves to the Lord." You are to have faith, as in the precept, so in the promise of God: and this you have in the words of the text, where it is promised, "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts:" as also in the 21st verse of the chapter, "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; and they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Here is furniture for vowing, and paying of vows: "They shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." We must act faith upon the covenant of promise, and upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as the altar of acceptance; for we must bring all our presents to this Altar. As there was no other altar of old, where the Lord's people were to worship, but at Jerusalem; so here there is no other altar but Christ, where we can be accepted as to our persons and services, and to which we are to bring all our offerings, Is. lvi. 7. "Their sacrifices and burnt-offerings shall be accepted upon mine altar." This is the altar that sanctifies the gifts; for "he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." But then,

2. As we are to swear to the Lord of hosts believingly, and in faith, so we are to do it with due deliberation, and in judgment, Jer. iv. 2. "And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment,

"and in righteousness: and the nations shall bless
 "themselves in him, and in him shall they glory."
 "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth in *truth*:" That is,
 we are to consider, and be assured, that what we swear
 be truth. It is to be in *righteousness*: That is, we are
 to be faithful and righteous in paying our vows, and
 not to deal with a slack hand with the Lord. It is
 also to be in *judgment*: That is, with knowledge and
 understanding of what we swear, according to our
 different capacities and abilities to know matters.
 But it is not to be thought that every one has the
 same judgment and capacity. You may take notice
 for this, Neh. x. 28. "And the rest of the people,
 "the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the
 "Nethinims, and all they that had separated them-
 "selves from the people of the land, unto the law of
 "God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters,
 "every one having knowledge and understanding."
 Vers. 29. "They clave unto their brethren, and en-
 "tered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in
 "God's law, which was given by Moses, the servant of
 "God." There you may observe, that there were
 people of very different capacities entered into this
 oath. It is said, "Every one having knowledge
 "and understanding;" that is, they had a competent
 measure of knowledge and understanding, though
 they had not all the same measure of knowledge. For
 we may observe here, that not only those who were
 priests and Levites joined in the work, but likewise
 the rest of the people, every one that had separated
 themselves from the people of the lands, all that saw
 it to be their duty to turn to the Lord, their wives,
 their sons, and their daughters. As there was such a
 mixed multitude of people, in different stations, join-
 ing in that work, it is not to be thought they had
 all alike knowledge and understanding of the law of
 God, either of the moral or ceremonial law; but such

as joined in that work, were such as had some knowledge of their duty, and desired to know it, and did lie open to light, and to receive instruction in what was dark unto them. We say, it is to be with *judgment*; that is, with what judgment the Lord has given to us to understand this matter.

BUT then, as it is to be done in judgment; so,
3. We are to swear to the Lord of hosts *reverently*. Every duty ought to be performed with holy awe and reverence; and so surely this among the rest. That is one of the great causes of the Lord's wrath and heavy indignation at this day, that we have lost realizing vows of God, as he hath manifested himself in Emmanuel, God with us. Let us have grace in our hearts, that we may serve him with reverence and godly fear. This reverence, this godly fear, must just be with grace in our hearts. We have not one right thought of God in our hearts by nature; nothing but unbelief there. It is by faith we attain sanctifying thoughts of God, enabling us to sanctify the Lord God of hosts in our hearts, and to make him our fear, and to make him our dread. As we are to perform every duty with holy reverence of God, so, in a particular manner, this great and infinite name of JEHOVAH our God. When Jacob made a covenant with Laban, he swore by the fear of his father Isaac; that is, by the God of his father Isaac, who feared and adored the true God. But then,

4. WE are to swear to the Lord of hosts *sincerely*, Psal. lxvi. 18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart: the Lord will not hear me." You see what was the sin the Lord condemns in Israel of old, Psal. lxxviii. 36. 37. "Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied to him with their tongues;

“for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.” We must then be concerned to have the heart made right, and, for this end, must put it in his hand to make it right; for he saith, “A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the heart of stone, and will give you an heart of flesh. Behold, I make all things new!” If we come to that duty, regarding any sin in our hearts, we may be assured the Lord will not hear us. If the infinite JEHOVAH observe, that any thing lie nearer our hearts than himself and his glory, then he will despise all our vows and engagements. We are then, I say, to put the heart in his hand, to make it right for himself. This was the prayer of the Psalmist, “Make my heart sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.” He makes our hearts sound as to their principle, and the main end, though there are and will be corruptions with us, so long as we are hereaway. Again,

5. WE are to swear to the Lord of hosts *singly*, making his glory our main end and aim. O! if we come with bye-ends to this work, we will draw wrath down upon the congregation of Israel.—“When ye fasted in the fifth and seventh month, did you fast at all to me?” saith the Lord concerning Israel. Self was the reigning principle with them: they did not fast so much for the cause of their captivity, as for the captivity itself. O what fasting to the Lord have we? How much self! how little singleness is with us in all we do! But we have need to take heed to our end, if it be with a view to his glory. If we come with any bye-ends, such as, that we may be neighbour-like, the Lord will observe and remark that man by himself, and fearful will his judgment be.

We have to do with the Searcher of hearts, who understands heart-secrets, and who tries the reins of the children of men. But then,

6. As to the manner of our vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts, it is to be done *cheerfully*. "All Judah," it is said, "rejoiced at the oath," in Asa's time. As God loveth a cheerful giver, so he loveth a cheerful covenanter. We are to do it with heart and hand, willingly and thankfully, that ever he made a covenant with his Chosen; and that the covenant made with him, also stands fast with him; that ever he enabled us to take hold of that covenant made with his Chosen; and that he inclined our hearts, in the faith of his covenant, to devote ourselves to him in a covenant of duty. "All Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their hearts, and fought him with their whole desire, and he was found of them," 2 Chron. xv. 15.

7. We are to vow and swear to the Lord of hosts *timeously*, not to put off this moral duty, by pretended shifts or delays. Sometimes weakness stands in the way of a person's going on to their duty; sometimes the enemy's temptations stand in the way; sometimes a spirit of lukewarmness in the cause of Christ; and sometimes the prevalency of unbelief and indwelling sin strike out against these sacred and holy bonds, objecting against this, as against other duties. Many have this and the other objection; whereas, if the truth of the matter were heard, some of these evils, just now mentioned, would be found at the bottom, even with some who have the root of the matter in them. But we are to go about this duty *timeously*. The Lord discerns all our thoughts, whether our objections be really matter of concern to us, or if they be

only a shift, that we may delay our duty for the present : if so it be with any of us, our duty may be long, yea, perhaps for ever, hid from us. He will resent such a quarrel. It is not indeed to be done rashly, but deliberately ; but yet it is not to be delayed, upon any trifling excuse. People are to beware of unnecessary shifts in present duty, to beware of what may stand in the way as obstructions, hindering their paying public homage to the God of Israel. We are to-day to hear his voice ; for it is to-day his command runs. We have no to-morrows given us at all, in matters of present duty ; but, " To-day," saith the Holy Ghost, " if you will hear his voice." If this opportunity be lost, we may never see another. We have now, by the kind providence of God, an opportunity, which many of the Lord's people, now in glory, prayed for, wrestled for, would have been glad to have seen, and died in the faith of. Let us then, though under many discouragements, bless the Lord, for what he hath directed to in this matter. O then be exhorted to set about personal covenanting, in order to public covenanting. I tell every one of you that are baptized, you are bound to this. Will you then make light of your baptismal vows and engagements ? " I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," saith the Lord. We summon every one here to believe the promise this night. It looks to every one of you, for you are either the thirsty, or the dry ground. " I will pour water on the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : " not only upon the thirsty ground, that has some greenness upon it, but even the wild out-field, that is just useless, is included in the promise. " I will pour floods upon the dry ground." O look for his coming in the promise of the Spirit. You was baptized in the

name of the Holy Ghost, and he is the Spirit of grace and supplication, which he has said he will pour upon the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You may look for his coming down as the rain upon the grafs; and, upon his coming, you shall be made to mourne for him, as one mourneth for his only son, or for a first-born.

So much for a hint at the manner in which we are to vow and swear to the Lord of hosts.

IV. WE proceed to the *fourth* head in the method, namely, To shew that the Lord's people, essaying to vow and swear to the Lord of hosts, may warrantably trust a promising God, that he will enable them to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace.

O! IF we are helped singly to trust him, this will be the only way to praise him. We have good reason to trust him, and distrust ourselves. Let us then come confidently to the work, with an eye of faith to him, putting all our trust in him. We have good warrant so to do, if we consider,

I. THAT we have his command to this duty: Psal. lxxvi. 11. "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him, bring presents unto him that ought to be feared." We may trust him, then: he puts no work in our hand, but what he will give strength to perform, to the praise of his grace. He has taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, thy kingdom come." And will not he enable us to say, "Hosanna to the Son of David?" "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

2. We may trust that he will enable us to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace, because we are called to trust in him at all times, and therefore at this time, and in this duty. We ought to trust him in the work of shewing forth his death, the best work ever was put in our hands, to be performed by us in his strength. And we may trust him also in a time of renewing our solemn engagements unto him: Psal. xxvi. 8. "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." He is a refuge for strength to perform all our duties, and a refuge for safety in all our difficulties.

3. We have good warrant to trust a promising God, that he will enable us to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace; because it is a duty wherein he is glorified. It is for his glory; and will he not help us to do what is for his glory? And has he left us alone to lift up the burden of his praise? No, he will not; for in the new covenant, he has taken the burden on himself, and has promised to make his grace sufficient for us, and to perfect his strength in our weakness. God is glorified, by confessing that truth, that "Christ is Lord," Phil. ii. 11.; and that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And he has said, That "all nations, whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name; for thou art great, and dost wondrous things: thou art God alone," Psal. lxxxvi. 9. 10. Christ "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; was found in fashion as a man; humbled himself, and became obedient unto death: therefore God hath also highly exalted him: and given

“ him a name, which is above every name : that at
“ the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of
“ things in heaven, and things in earth, and things
“ under the earth ; and that every tongue should
“ confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
“ God the Father,” Phil. ii. 7. 8. 9. 10. So God
the Father will have no glory in the church at all, if
it is not in a way of confessing that Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

4. WE may trust him, that he will enable us to
perform this duty, to the praise of his grace ; upon
this ground, namely, the ground of his own promise.
Would we have any better security than this in the
text ? “ In that day shall five cities in the land of
“ Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and shall
“ swear to the Lord of hosts.” They shall have a
new dialect among them, and they shall swear to the
Lord of hosts. This is a promise that looks to us,
and we are warranted to plead it. When a man
speaks, he speaks but to one particular person, or
but to a few ; but when God speaks, he speaks to
every one : “ In that day shall five cities in the land
“ of Egypt swear unto the Lord of hosts.” This is
spoken of New-Testament times, and concerning
dark times ; for it is said, “ In that day shall five
“ cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of
“ hosts.” There shall be some here, and some there,
though but a few in respect of the bulk of the land.
Statesmen and kirkmen shall hold on their back-
sliding way ; but a few, “ five cities in the land of
“ Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts.” To whom
is the word spoken ? Why ! it is to Egypt, and to
us, who, in respect of darkness and spiritual bondage,
are like unto the Egyptians. “ Five cities in the
“ land of Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts.”

The promise is to us, and the Promiser is the Lord of hosts. The word of promise then must be sure, when it is spoken by the Lord of hosts, JEHOVAH-TZEBAOOTH. And you have the promise not only in the text, but also in the context, vers. 21. "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Why! here is knowledge, by which we may vow and swear to the Lord of hosts. "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day." We are to swear in knowledge and in judgment. Here it is: "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; yea, they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." I assure you, though we had all the knowledge upon earth, if we want supernatural knowledge, that is, knowledge by God's teaching, we will never perform this duty aright: but he hath said it, "They shall know the Lord in that day;" they shall know the Object of their worship; and they shall swear to the Lord of hosts. Consider, the very manner of performing this duty is taken in the promise; for it is said, "They shall know the Lord, and they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it;" that is, they shall vow and swear in faith, and in a dependence on Emmanuel, in obedience to his command, in the faith of his promise, and with some measure of singleness, in aim and end. "They shall swear unto the Lord of hosts."

5. We have good warrant to trust a promising God, that he will enable us to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace, if we consider what a faithful God hath said to his eternal Son. We have his word for our through-bearing, to his eternal Son, *Ic. xlix. 3.*

"Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." We may just grip to that word, which he has said to Christ; "And said unto me, 'Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'" God will be glorified in Christ, and therefore we may just put in, that we may be helped to glorify God through Christ, and in Christ to be enabled to do every work he calls to, to his praise. And is not this a work to his praise? We may then put our part of the work in Christ's hand, and then we shall be enabled to do it, to the praise of God's grace; for Christ is his Servant, in whom he will be glorified.

6. We may trust that we shall be enabled to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace, when we have not only God's word and promise to his eternal Son, but also Christ's word for it to us, John xv. 4. 5. "Abide in me, and I in you: for without me ye can do nothing." This is the word which he is speaking to all the worshippers coming up to the mount, at this time, "Abide in me, and I in you:" abide in me by faith, and I in you by my Spirit. "I am the vine; ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." "Abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing." He is willing and ready to be employed in every duty: to be employed for assistance; "Without me ye can do nothing:" to be employed for acceptance, "for he is girded about the paps with a golden girdle," just that we may hold him by the same for acceptance, when we come with all our offerings. "Abide in me, and I in you; for without me ye can do nothing:" you can do nothing to the glorifying of God without me: it is not

the will of God that you do any thing without me : I am just with you in all your work. If you go to family-fasting, to personal and secret, or to public fasting, or whatever duty you go to, take me ay with you ; I am just able and willing to be with you, and to be employed by you at every turn ; for “ without me ye can do nothing.”

7. WE have good warrant to trust a promising God, that he will enable us to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace ? Why ! Because our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the worshipping assembly in the upper and lower house, and no worship can be managed without him. Innocent angels approach God in their own persons, as did Adam in his innocence ; but now, by the Spirit, through the Son, we have access to the Father. The Spirit is in the church, to bring us to God in the name of Christ : therefore it is said by the apostle Peter, in his first epistle, 2d chapter and 9th verse, “ Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” You are a holy nation, under the Head of the holy nation. And what is to be your work ? Why ! It is “ to shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” And, among the ways, to shew forth his praise ; these are none of the least, namely, Swearing to the Lord of hosts, and shewing forth his death till he come again : both of which we have a very near prospect of. It will be your own fault if you do not see him by faith, in both these ordinances, who is the Head of the worshipping assembly, both in the upper and lower house. But then,

8. UPON this head, we have good ground to trust a promising God, that he will enable us to perform this duty of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts, to the praise of his grace. Why! Because this is the method he uses in settling and establishing the order of the Lord's house; namely, to bind his servants and people, by an oath of allegiance to the King of Zion, to be loyal subjects to him, and to observe, and keep pure and entire, all his institutions, and the order of his house. And we may trust him with all the work. Zech. vi. 12. 13. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne." There has been great treachery and breaking of vows made to him, and therefore there is a call to us to swear allegiance to him: and we may go on to this work in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only. So much for the *fourth* thing in the method, which was to shew that the Lord's people, in essaying to vow and swear to the Lord of hosts, may warrantably trust a promising God, that he will enable them to perform this duty, to the praise of his grace.

V. WE now come, in the *fifth* and *last* place, to apply the doctrine. And, 1. It may be applied in an use of *Examination* and *Trial*.

Is it so then, as has been said, that as it is the duty of the church and people of God, in New-Testament times, to renew their national vows and cove-

nants, though they be the smaller number, compared with the opposers of reformation; so they may warrantably trust a promising God, that he will enable them to perform that duty, to the praise of his grace?

THEN it calls us, upon this occasion, to examine ourselves. As we have great and solemn work in view, the work of shewing forth the Lord's death till he come again, and the solemn work of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts, it is certainly necessary that we examine ourselves. For as it is said by our Lord, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" so it is his will and command that we examine ourselves, in order to solemn vowing-work. Let a man examine himself, and so let him vow, and so let him swear to the Lord of hosts. For though the duties of shewing forth the Lord's death, and swearing to the Lord of hosts, be duties all of us are bound unto; yet it is not the immediate duty of any, in a natural state, either to approach the Lord's table, or swear to the Lord of hosts. But it is the first and immediate duty of every one out of Christ, to come to him by faith, and then to approach his table, and join in vowing to Jacob's mighty God. But as to all those who are believers in Christ, it is not only their duty, but their immediate duty, to go up to the mount of ordinances, and shew forth his death till he come, and to join in vowing-work, when there is a present call to it in this congregation; therefore it is our duty to examine ourselves. For though many of you have received tokens of admission to the Lord's table, we know not the hearts of men, we know not your state; and therefore the work of examination and trial, it comes all home to your own door. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that

“read, and drink of that cup.” O look to him, that he may be with you in your secret self-examination; and look to him, that he may be with you in his own word. When we are called to lay before you the marks and characters of those who ought to be employed in the solemn work in view, who are they, then, who are called to approach the table of the Lord, and to join in swearing to the Lord of hosts, and by joining in this solemn work of renewing our covenant-engagements to the Lord? We would have you to try it under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And,

(1.) We enquire at you, Are you the children of Zion, who ought to be joyful in their King? Are you the children of Zion, who have a call to this, as their immediate duty, to vow and pay to the Lord their God, to swear allegiance to Zion's King? It is the children of Zion, the native inhabitants of Zion, who are, in some measure, fitted, through grace, to swear to Zion's King, who is the Governor among the nations. Were you born in Zion? Were you born of the Spirit? Has there been a principle of spiritual life wrought in you by the Spirit, in regeneration? Try the matter. Where there is spiritual life, there is spiritual sensations. Has your soul been made to breathe after Christ, and fellowship with him, “till the day break, and the shadows fly away? “My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: “my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: “when shall I come and appear before God?” Psal. xlii. 2. “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh crieth out for the living God,” Psal. lxxxiv. 2. Try it. Are you groaning in this tabernacle, being burdened,

burdened with a load of indwelling sin? Are you feeling your burden of guilt, and of your spiritual wants and plagues? Try it, by your spiritual conflict with indwelling sin, and all your spiritual enemies. Is this your language, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Return, return, O Shulamite! What will you see in the Shulamite, but as it were the company of two armies?" Again, try it by your spiritual appetite after the hidden manna, after Christ himself. Do you feed upon Christ, the hidden manna, in the word of grace? Is the desire of your soul to him, and the remembrance of his name? Do you remember his love more than wine? Try it. Again, have you common interest and concerns with him? Do the reproaches of them who reproach him fall upon you? Are you grieved when he is dishonoured? and do you rejoice when he is honoured? Is there nothing so much the desire of your soul, as that David's horn may bud forth pleasantly in the work of God's grace within thee, and in the advancement of his declarative glory in the land, and every where, and that the crown may flourish upon his head?

(2.) Examine yourselves. Have you attained to any thing of a supernatural knowledge of Christ? and have you got some heavenly acquaintance with Christ? as you have it prophesied concerning the Egyptians, in the 21st verse of this chapter, "The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptian shall know the Lord in that day, and they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." You see this vowing to the Lord flows, in its nature and order, from a saving knowledge of the Lord. "The Egyptians shall know the Lord,—and they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Have you seen the

King in his beauty? Is your knowledge of God the fruit and effect of God's teaching you by his word and Spirit? And is it of that kind and nature, that the glory of God is manifested to you in the person of Christ, revealed to you by the Spirit, in the word of grace? 2 Cor. iv. 6. Have you got such a knowledge of him, as that you esteem him above all things? Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Have you got such a knowledge of him, as has made you sell all things to buy the Pearl of great price, the Treasure hid in the gospel-field? Such a knowledge of him, as has humbled thee, and made thee to abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes? Job xlii. 5. Is. vi. 6. Such a knowledge of him, as makes thee place thy chief happiness in him, in the blinks of his countenance; and to desire no other heaven for eternity, but to be where he is, to behold his glory? And does not this reconcile thee to lie down in the grave, in a little, that, when you awake, you shall be satisfied with his likeness, and behold his face in righteousness? Have you got such a knowledge of him, as that you have seen the glory of all the perfections of God centering in him; mercy and truth meeting in him; righteousness and peace kissing each other in him? Have you got such a knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him, as makes you prize his presence above all things? "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon?" Have you got such a knowledge of him, as makes you breathe after conformity and likeness to him? "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Do you love the Lord because he is holy? Do you, in some measure, when you are at yourself, rejoice at the remem-

brance of his holiness? Have you got such a knowledge of him, as has made you take up your standing for eternity upon the person of Christ, and his everlasting righteousness, saying, "Behold, O God, our Shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed?" Psal. lxxxiv. 9. Have you all your confidence fixed upon Christ alone, for time and eternity? But then,

(3.) As you have a view of bringing a present to him that ought to be feared, in devoting yourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty, have you been compassing the gospel-altar with the gift? Have you all your confidence fixed upon Christ alone, for acceptance of your persons and performances, as in vers. 19. "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt? Are you worshippers at this altar? And is Christ all in all to you, for righteousness and strength? Do you trust to the sacrifice of a crucified Christ, as a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour unto God, to perfume your person, and this and every duty and performance? There is a perfuming savour, an abundant and fresh savour in this sacrifice: Eph. v. 2. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God, for a sweet-smelling savour." This his sacrifice has perfumed the four wide corners of the heaven of heavens. There is an abundant savour here to perfume all our offerings; and it is as fresh as it was that day, when he bowed the head, and gave up the ghost:

(4.) Are you among those that are crying to the Lord because of your oppressors, as it is promised concerning Egypt, in the 20th verse, "They shall cry unto the Lord, because of their oppressors, and

"He shall send them a Saviour and a great One, and he shall deliver them?" His people are a praying people, and they are sensible of the spiritual oppressions they are under; and they send their cry daily to Heaven, because of their spiritual oppressors. They are oppressed with temptations, desertions, and indwelling sin: and out of these depths they cry unto the Lord most high, to God who performeth all things for them. They keep a daily correspondence and communion with God, in closet-prayer, in family-prayer, and by ejaculatory prayer. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul," Psal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," Psal. v. 3. They not only pray, but seek and wait for answer: "I will direct my cry unto thee, and will look up." As they are made to love him, so, through grace, they are made to resolve to call upon him as long as they live.

(5.) ARE you among those who are crying, Hosanna to the Son of David, to Messiah the Prince, the Saviour and great One, whom God has sent to deliver you, as in the 20th verse of this chapter, where our text lies? Have you been made to assent to God's record concerning Christ, and to receive him, as offered to you in the gospel of Christ, and to say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us? Save now, I beseech thee; send now prosperity." Is Christ the Saviour, whom God has sent to deliver you, indeed, a great One in your view? Have you seen his infinite holiness, salvation, and loveliness? Is it thy desire that he may be great to the ends of the earth? "He shall stand, and feed in the name of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and now shall he

"be great to the ends of the earth." Have you seen the need of him, as a Saviour and a great One to deliver you? that none but the infinite One, the great One, could save you from your sins? Have you seen such a multitude of sins in you, and such an infinite evil in every sin, that you can get no rest but in him, and in that salvation that he hath wrought? Are you receiving him by faith, as sent of God to deliver you? Are you living by faith upon him, as your Saviour and deliverer? Are you waiting for redemption in Jerusalem; waiting for the time, when you shall be perfected in conformity and likeness unto him? But then,

(6.) HAS God put it in your hearts, from faith in, and love to Christ, to put in your small mite, to make his name to be remembered to all generations? And is it the earnest and inward desire of your heart, that the Lord may enable you, by his grace, to glorify and honour Christ, publicly and avowedly, in a day when he is so publicly dishonoured and disowned by church and state? Are you going out to commanded duty, just distrusting yourselves, and trusting him with all the work? Are you essaying to confess him before men, hoping that he will be your light and your salvation; that he will work all the work, and bear all the glory? All those that are his disciples, are to own and confess him before men, as in the 19th verse of this chapter: "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord." Not only an altar, Christ the gospel-altar, but there shall be a pillar to the Lord in the border of the land of Egypt; a pillar inscribed to the Lord of hosts, inscribed to JEHOVAH. As they had formerly their pillars inscribed to their

idols and false gods, so now there is a pillar inscribed to the Lord in the border of the land of Egypt. "In him, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Sin is come to such a height, that men are boasting of their wickedness, boasting in their lewdness, boasting in their apostasy from God's truth and cause, and in their opposing of the same; therefore there ought to be a faith's boldness, in borrowed strength from Christ, in owning him and his cause at this day. "There shall be a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord."

(7.) EXAMINE and try yourselves. Are you those that speak the language of Canaan? Are you true church-members, and native inhabitants of Canaan? It is only those who speak the language of Canaan that are fit to swear to the Lord of hosts. The connection is very remarkable in the text: "In that day shall five cities in the Land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts." This is one of the dialects of Canaan; "They shall swear to the Lord of hosts," Try it then. Do you speak the language of Canaan? Are you native inhabitants of the church of Christ? Have you a new heart, a new nature? "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Are old things past away, and all things become new with you? Do you speak the language of Canaan, the language of self-distrust, and the language of faith on the Son of God? This is the language of Canaan. The men of the world, they cannot understand it. When they hear the special doctrines of regeneration, and of faith on the Son of God preached up, why! it is just all a strange language to them. But is that thy language, the language of faith's trust in Emmanuel, God with us? Do you speak

the language of Canaan? It is scripture-language, scripture-style, that was the language of Canaan. Is his word to you most precious? Do you rejoice in his word, as one that findeth great spoil? Is it to you like pleasant pastures; like honey, and the honey-comb? Are you made to speak the language of Canaan in secret converse with God, when none but he sees you? "The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time; and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life," Psal. xlii. 8. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee," Psal. xvi. 2. Do you speak the language of Canaan, with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Vers. 26. "My heart and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever?" And with the church, Lam. iii. 24. "The Lord is my portion, faith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." And with Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 21. "The Lord shall be my God; and this shall be the house of God." This was also Jacob's language at Peniel, when he wrestled as a prince, and had power with God: "I will not let thee go till thou bless me." It was the language of Moses, when he puts up that prayer: "I beseech thee shew me thy glory." It is also the language of the church: Is. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. This is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Are you helped to speak the language of Canaan in your converse and table-talk? Do you speak of Christ there? Do you speak of him to your children and servants? Do you speak of Christ in his

person, love, and loveliness? Do you speak of him, as you rise up and as you lie down, as you walk by the way-side, in your converse with fellow-Christians, and in your social meetings? "Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." There is a telling what God hath done for our soul; but this is to be done singly, prudently, and humbly. Try it then. Do you speak the language of Canaan in your converse with one another, endeavouring that there may be something of Christ in every conversation? O how little is the case, when there is so much vain and idle talking, even on the Lord's-day! But he hath said, "I will turn to the people of a pure language, and they shall serve him with one consent." We proceed,

2. To apply the doctrine in an use of *Exhortation*, particularly to you who are strangers to Christ, and have never, to this very day, taken hold of God's covenant of promise, and so are not fit to swear to him in a covenant of duty,

WE come this day to exhort you, from the Lord, to repent and believe the gospel; for "the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise is spoken to you, though you have never yet, by faith, heard the heavenly and divine voice of the infinite Speaker. The promise is spoken to you, and left to you. And we would say to you, "Take heed, therefore, seeing there is a promise left you of entering into his rest, lest any of you seem to come short of it by unbelief." We are commissioned to publish the record of God this day: and this is the record, That to you man, to you woman, "is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is

"Christ the Lord: that to you a Child is born, to
 "you a Son is given, whose name is **WONDERFUL**,
 "Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the mighty God,
 "and the Prince of peace." That God giveth to
 you "eternal life; and this life is in his Son:" that
 to you is "the word of this salvation sent;" to you
 who are lost and perishing sinners of Adam's family.
 Christ is given to you for your Saviour; and, in the
 Lord's most holy name, we make a full and free offer
 of Christ to you, and to every one of you, as the Sa-
 viour of the world, as willing to save you from your
 sins. Thus saith the Lord, "I am the Lord thy
 "God, which brought thee out of the land of E-
 "gypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. I
 "will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be
 "clean; and from all thy filthiness, and from all thine
 "idols will I cleanse you. Come now let us reason
 "together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as
 "scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they
 "be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," *Is. i.*
18. *John x. 16.* "Other sheep I have which are not
 "of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall
 "hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one
 "Shepherd. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have
 "no other gods before me." This is the great
 charter of the covenant laid before you, to be belie-
 ved by you, that "God was in Christ reconciling the
 "world to himself, not imputing to them their tres-
 "passes." And we are ambassadors for Christ, as
 though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in
 Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God; for "he
 "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,
 "that we might be made the righteousness of God in
 "him." In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we
 offer him to every soul in all this company, as the great
 God your Saviour; and we say to you, **Make haste,**

come down, man, woman, and receive him joyfully ; for this day is salvation come to thine house ; this day is salvation come to thy soul, even the God of salvation : for thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying unto you, “ I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not “ remember thy sins,” *Is. xliii. 25.* O ! Why do you stand aback from Christ then ? Is it because you are guilty sinners ? Then he publisheth his indemnity to you : “ I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions “ for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Is it because you are not only guilty sinners, but filthy and polluted ? You have just a burden of guilt and filth binding you over to the wrath of God. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, “ Then will I “ sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be “ clean : from all your filthiness and from all your “ idols will I cleanse you.” Why do you stand aback from Christ ? Is it because you have the old unrenewed heart standing in your way ? Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, “ A new heart also “ will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Are you objecting you have a hard impenitent heart, and cannot be affected with all your sins, for as many as they are ? Thus saith the Lord, “ I will “ take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will “ give you an heart of flesh.” Are you objecting his law is a holy law, and you have unholy hearts ; and though you would mint at receiving Christ, you will never be able to walk in his statutes, nor to keep his judgments ? Why, “ Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, “ saying, I will put my Spirit within you, and cause “ you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my “ judgments, and do them.” Again, are you objecting your sins are not like the sins of others, they are so great, and so highly aggravated ? “ Thus saith the

“ Lord, Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” We are inviting you this day to come and hear the voice of the one Shepherd, in his word of grace. It is not merely and only the voice of man that speaketh unto you, but these are the words of the Shepherd of Israel, who saith, “ I lay down my life for the sheep; and other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.” How does he bring them that are wandering upon the mountains? Why, just by causing them to hear his voice: “ They shall hear my voice. Hear, and your souls shall live. I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali.” We shall,

3. As the Lord assisteth, apply the doctrine in a word of direction, to you who have it in view to come unto the table of the Lord, and to approach the Lord in this solemn work of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts.

{1.} We would direct you to prepare for this solemn work. The Israelites were to prepare for eating the passover, and we are to prepare to eat this gospel-passover; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. We are to prepare for every duty, and more especially for such solemn duties, as sitting down at the table of the Lord, and swearing to the Lord of hosts; swearing by the great name of the Lord our God; swearing allegiance to Zion's King, that we will, through grace, follow him fully, walk in all his

commandments, keep his judgments and his statutes, and hearken to his voice. You are then to prepare,

[1.] For such a solemn duty, as vowing to Jacob's mighty God, by putting preparation-work, by faith, in the Lord's hand: "The preparation of the heart is from the Lord. Lord, prepare our hearts unto thee," saith David. You must just put every branch of our preparation into his hand, and cry with David, "Lord, prepare our hearts unto thee." Act faith on this, that he has promised to prepare the heart himself; and take him with you in every duty, for he saith, "Without me ye can do nothing."

[2.] PREPARE, by retiring alone, and setting apart some time for secret fasting and humiliation. O! You are to profess, upon the ensuing occasion, to be a people humbled before the Lord, for the breaches of God's covenant, and for your own sins, as breaches of it. Ought you not then to be humbled in secret? This is not a work and duty to be managed in a trifling way and manner. Set apart some time then, before the approach of the day for public humiliation, for secret fasting and humiliation before the Lord.

[3.] PREPARE, by considering the matter of your vow to the Lord, and by examining if the Lord has inclined your heart to his testimonies, and made you to love God as holy, and his law as holy; and if he has inclined your heart to breathe after conformity with himself. If that be wrought in your heart, you will just say amen to all the engagements you are called to come under to the Lord.

[4.] PREPARE for public covenanting, and that by secret personal covenanting. Let there be an effaying, just between God and you, to take hold by

faith of God's covenant of promise, as your only charter for the heavenly inheritance, and then take hold, by faith also, of his righteousness, as the only propitiation for your sins; and particularly resolve against every sin, and the sin that does most easily beset you, calling, in the grace and strength of the Lord, to bring to destruction every lust and corruption of thy heart.

[5.] **PREPARE**, by much closet-wrestling, in secret prayer, with the blessed Angel of the covenant, that his presence may go with you, or that he may not carry you up hence. Wrestle with God for yourselves, for those of your concerns, for the families, societies, and congregations whereof you are members, for those who are to join with you in this solemn work, and for the land in general, and for our neighbouring lands. You have great work before you, and therefore we recommend Jacob's exercise to you: "He wept, and made supplication unto him. He found him in Bethel, and there "he spake with us." And if you, who are servants, cannot obtain allowance of as much time as is proper for such weighty work, to be transacted between the Lord and you in secret, either hire some others to work for you, or redeem time for this purpose from your night's rest; and let none come slightly to this solemn work: "for he will be sanctified in them "that draw near to him, and before all the people "he will be glorified;" and he communicates his grace and furniture for the solemn work he calleth us unto, in these means of his own institution.

(2.) As we would direct you to prepare for this solemn work, so we would direct you to be absolutely denied to your preparation; for, "Curst be the "man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his

“ arm ;” but, “ Blessed is the man that trusteth in
“ the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is : he shall
“ be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that
“ bringeth forth his fruit in his season : his leaf also
“ shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doth shall pro-
“ sper.”

(3.) LET faith be acted upon the Holy Spirit of promise. We are to believe in the Holy Ghost : he is in the gospel-church to be believed upon : he was in it since ever the first blast of the gospel-trumpet was sounded in paradise, immediately after the fall : Hag. ii. 5. “ My Spirit remaineth among you
“ to this day ; fear ye not.” And again, Is. xlv. 3. 4. 5. “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,
“ and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my
“ Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine
“ offspring ; and they shall spring up, as among the
“ grafs, as willows by the water-courses. One shall
“ say, I am the Lord’s,” &c. It is only through him that this duty can be managed to any purpose ; and our Lord saith, “ If I depart, I will send him
“ unto you.” He is in the gospel-church, therefore act faith on him, as he has undertaken to convince the world of sin, that he may give you a view of your sin, and of the land’s sin. “ When he is come,
“ he shall glorify me,” saith Christ. O act faith on him, in his person and in his office, as glorifying Christ, and the things of Christ, and shewing them unto you. Act faith on him, as your teacher and remembrancer : “ He shall teach you all things, and
“ bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever
“ I have said unto you.” Act faith on him, as the Holy Ghost, your Sanctifier ; as the Spirit of grace that works and operates grace in you ; as the Spirit of humiliation, to teach you to look on Christ whom

you have pierced, and to mourn for him. Act faith on him, as having undertaken to apply the purchase of man's redemption and salvation. Act faith on him, as JEHOVAH, the divine Spirit, of whom Christ hath said, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 17.

(4.) *ESSAY* this great work, depending on the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and strength, Psal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Song viii. 5. "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, faith the Lord." O come forward, just depending on him for righteousness and strength, who has said, "In thy righteousness shall they be exalted." This will do, and carry us through this great work; and nothing else will do us any good.

(5.) *IN* a way of direction, in the strength of Christ, and the grace that is in Christ, come forward, and approach the Lord in that solemn ordinance, both of vowing and swearing to the Lord, and shewing forth the Lord's death till he come again. Come, I say, in the exercise of grace. And,

[1.] *LET* faith be in exercise on the promise of God, and the person of Christ. Come forward, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith: looking to him in his person, looking to him in his ascension, as the Forerunner that has entered within the vail. Let faith be in exercise, looking on, and beholding the glory of the Beloved. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we be-

“held his glory; the glory as of the only-begotten
“of the Father, full of grace and truth,” John
i. 14. “And out of his fulness have all we received;
“and grace for grace.” “Now Timothy, my son,
“be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

[2.] LET repentance be in a lively exercise in this solemn approach. O! this is a fit season for gospel-repentance, when we take a view of our own sins, and the sins of the present generation, and of the former generation; as you have them noticed in that confession that is prefixed to the bond and engagement to duty, which we are so solemnly to come under to the Most High God. You see this was the exercise of Israel and Judah, in Jer. l. 4. “In those days, and
“at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel
“shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek
“the Lord their God. I will bring them, saith the
“Lord, with weeping; and with supplications will
“I lead them.” O what need have we to mourn, if we take a look of the great JEHOVAH, whose name is dishonoured by our sins! And you see there is grace in the promise to enable us to perform this duty: “They shall come, weeping as they go.” As we have sinned against the Lord God of our fathers, so you see there is a promise of repentance; and not only is this a promised grace, but it is commended by our Lord when performed, Song vii. 4. “Thine
“eyes are like the fish-pools of Heshbon, by the gate
“of Bathrabbim.”

[3.] WE ought to come with love in exercise. The love of Christ is to constrain us to this duty. “The
“love of Christ constraineth us,” says the apostle,
“because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then

"were all dead." We are to come with a superlative love unto him that died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. What is the great work we have in view, but to promise, in the strength of the grace of the Lord Jesus, to love him that died for us, and rose again; and, as an evidence of our love to him, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and judgments, and hearken to his voice.

[4.] LET us come in the exercise of gospel-obedience, taking the law out of the hands of Christ the Mediator, saying, in his strength, that we will keep his righteous judgments: "I will keep thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly," Psal. cxix. 8.

[5.] LET holy fear and reverence be in exercise: "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear," Heb. xii. 28. "I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

[6.] APPROACH the Lord in this solemn ordinance, with the staff of the promise in the hand of faith. I say, just come forward to this holy ground, with the staff of the promise in the hand of faith; for we will not keep our feet at all here, if we want this staff in the hand of faith. We have it then in the text: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts;" and in vers. 21. "The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." I will enable them to know me the Lord of hosts: that is in the promise, just hold it up to him.

"I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord." That says as much as I will prevent them from rash swearing; they shall have some twilight-views of me, the Object of their worship, who am JEHOVAH-TZEBAOOTH. Here he hath undertaken for the work: "They shall swear to the Lord of hosts; they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Vowing to the Lord is for his glory and honour, and therefore put in a promise. I will be with them in the work: they shall do it in a way of dependence on me. I will see to the ongoing of the work: "They shall vow, and shall perform it." O then, come in his strength, trusting his promise, and making mention of his righteousness, even of his only.

WE conclude this subject, by making some farther improvement of this doctrine. And we now proceed to improve it, in an use of *Reproof* to several sorts of persons. The word of God is profitable for reproof as well as for doctrine; and we live in a period, wherein our gold is become dim, our most fine gold is changed; wherein sad and melancholy changes have past upon the church and land, and wherein the Heathen have entered into the congregation of the Lord, and pulled down the carved work of his sanctuary with axes and hammers. We live in a day wherein a worldly spirit has prevailed; a selfish spirit does prevail; a spirit of error and delusion doth prevail; a spirit of neutrality and indifferency, as to the cause of Christ, doth prevail: in consequence whereof, the language of this day is the language of Ashdod: but the language of Canaan is forgot by the bulk; and therefore the generation is astonished, when they hear any of the language of Canaan spoken; especially this part of that language, namely, Swearing to the Lord of hosts. But, however, this is the lan-

guage of the church of Christ, of true church-members. And it is good, that however few there be to speak this language, it is the Lord himself who builds his church in troublesome times, and he will have his work go on, whatever men say or do against it : for he hath said, “ Five cities in the land of Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts.” Five cities in Scotland, that was formerly like Goshen, but now turned like Egypt, by setting up their own interest and profit in God’s room, setting their thresholds in the room of his threshold ; but yet, “ five cities in that day,” in the gospel-day, “ shall swear to the Lord of hosts.”

BUT to proceed. Seeing it is the duty of the church and people of God, in New-Testament times, to renew their national vows and covenants ; and that they may confidently trust a promising God, that he will enable them to perform this duty to his praise ; then this doctrine reaches a reproof,

1. To those who are for delaying and putting off this necessary duty, till, as they think, there be a more fit opportunity, and till they be so and so qualified for such a work and duty. But it must be considered, that they destroy and overthrow the very nature of evangelical obedience, who neglect plain and known duty, till they find such frames, enlargements, and good qualifications in themselves, for essaying to comply with the Lord’s call to duty. We are to essay duty, not in the strength of our own frames and enlargements, but in obedience to the call of God, and in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, brought near to us in the word of grace and promise, and not in the strength of grace received : for what is that but to say, we are to go through it in

our own strength, and not in the strength of that unmeasurable ocean of the fulness of grace that is in Christ Jesus? And as to the fitness of the opportunity, it may be observed, that these lands have been putting off this duty, for more than these fifty years, for a more fit opportunity; and that opportunity they have never yet got. The time has come for other things, but not for this duty. The time has come for building our own houses; but not for building the house of the Lord. See what the Lord saith, in that first chapter of Haggai, 2d, 4th, 5th, and 8th verses, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people saith, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord." This is an opportunity offered us in the course of divine providence, wherein his hand remarkably appears, and is evident to be seen by all that have any spiritual discerning; and wherein his infinite goodness and condescension is remarkably manifested. This then must be the very time, season, and opportunity for us to renew our solemn covenant-engagements to the Lord, if we consider,

(1.) How exceedingly God has been dishonoured among us, by all sorts of covenant-violation. There has been an universal violation of our solemn covenants in these lands; and that by every one of us, even by persons of all ranks. And it is very plain, that the Lord is threatening to send a foreign enemy, with his sword drawn in their hand, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. Must not this then be a fit

time and season for us, to essay, by grace, to renew these our covenant-engagements to the Lord. But then,

(2.) LET us consider that this has been the practice of the church and people of God in all ages, both under the Old and New Testament, to renew their covenant-engagements, after a course of backsliding and apostasy from the Lord; as may appear from the covenants entered into in the times of Nehemiah, Ezra, Josiah, and others; and from the practice of the Macedonians, who gave themselves to the Lord; and from the solemn covenants entered into, in reforming times, by the churches in Germany, France, Scotland, England, and Ireland.

(3.) LET us consider, that enemies of all sorts are making great progress at this day. Popery and errors, and delusions of all sorts, are making great advances, are increasing like a flood, and are coming in, with great inundation, in these times. And it has been the practice of the Antichristian state to propagate and spread itself, by oaths and covenants, in all their fraternities and societies; and the Prelates in England have strengthened themselves, by swearing to their obedience all the inferior clergy, in their ordination-engagements, and oaths of canonical obedience. And ought not we then to use that mean for bringing down Babylon, which they have abused and perverted for building it up, especially seeing it is a commanded duty to renew our covenants with the Lord our God?

(4.) THIS is a fit season and opportunity, because it is an opportunity of God's offering to us. He offers this opportunity to make trial of us, if there be

a remnant in the land to own him. He is making a trial, if there be a party in these lands, to cleave to these solemn covenant-engagements; and, seeing he is making trial of us, it is our duty, at this very time, and in this season, to fall in with his call.

(5.) **THIS** is the time, season, and opportunity for this duty, because thus the Lord seems to be sealing his servants in the forehead, before the four winds blow, and bring on an hurricane of wrath upon these covenant-breaking lands; therefore the order is given to the angel, "Not to hurt the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till the servants of God be sealed in their foreheads," Rev. vii. 3. Why then do you think to know the time better, than as God doth point it out to you in his word and providence? If we duly consider matters as now stated, there are many things which may make us conclude, that seeing God, in his providence, has given us an opportunity of renewing our solemn national covenants, he intends by it to seal his servants and people, and prepare them for a storm of threatened judgments; and there are evident signs that God is purposing to avenge the quarrel of his buried and burnt covenants upon these perfidious and covenant-breaking lands, upon the account of their shedding the blood of the saints of the Most High, and for the contrary oaths and bonds which have been taken, in former and present times, subversive of the oath of God.

(6.) **THIS** is a fit season for this duty, if we consider, that not only is God hereby making a trial of us, as has been said, but he is hereby calling us to make a trial of him, as you may see in Mal. iii. 10. In the 7th verse, there is a call to return to the Lord, though they had gone away from his ordinances, &c.

ven from the days of their fathers ; and though they had robbed God, as in the 8th verse, and said, " Wherein have we robbed thee ? In tithes and in offerings." Sure that is a just charge against us at this day. Well, but what is the call in the 7th verse, " Return unto me, and I will return unto you," saith the Lord of hosts : but ye said, Wherein " shall we return ?" That is the very case of those in the day wherein we live. Wherein shall we return ? say they. But be assured their sin will find them out. " You are cursed with a curse ; for you have " robbed me, even this whole nation," vers. 9. A great sin is charged upon this people, that they had robbed God of his honour and glory ; robbed him in tithes and offerings, in not bringing them in according to his command, or not bringing them *in full*, or not bringing them *of the best*. They began ungratefully to forget him, when they were brought back again to their own land from Babylon, and robbed him in tithes and in offerings. So our Lord Jesus Christ hath been robbed in these lands, in his supreme Deity, in his crown-rights and royal prerogative ; and has been dishonoured by all that black catalogue of sins, which you have specified in the confession of sins, which is prefixed unto the oath and bond. But, notwithstanding of all this, what is the call in the 10th verse ? " Bring ye all the tithes in to " the storehouse, that there may be meat in my " house ; and prove me now herewith, saith the " Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows " of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall " not be room enough to receive it. Bring ye all " the tithes in to the storehouse." Here they are called to amend their ways, and to reform from this sacrilege, so contrary to the covenant of their God. And as we are many ways guilty of covenant-violation

tion, so we are called to bring tithes into his house, by personal and national reformation: "And prove me herewith, saith the Lord of hosts." Prove me, by returning to me in the renovation of these covenant-engagements, which you have broken and violated. We are to prove him, by adventuring upon his grace alone. "Prove me herewith," if you shall not find me faithful in all that I have promised: "If I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it;" pour you out the blessing you want and need; the blessing of gospel-humiliation; the blessing of self-emptying grace; the blessing of up-lifting grace; the blessing of strengthening grace to pay your vows; the blessing of supporting grace under all your trials; the blessing of through-bearing grace in all your straits and difficulties; the blessing of soul-sanctifying grace, and heart-purifying grace. "I will pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." You shall see such a flood of blessings about you, that whatever be the trial of the day, there shall be such plenty of blessings suited to the case poured out, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. We have been so long trying the world, and the vanities of this present life, that we will scarce take time to make a trial of God. "Prove me herewith, saith the Lord of hosts." O, the generation is not awakened to see the sad case they are in by the absence of Christ: they will not prove him: it is hard to know what will awaken them: sure nothing but himself. He it is who can make a backsliding generation say, "I will arise, and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now," Hos. ii. 7.

2. Is it so, as has been said? Then this doctrine

reaches a reproof to those that are throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of the Lord's people, and endeavouring to infuse groundless prejudices into their minds against this necessary duty, so loudly called for at this day. I do not think it proper for this place to go through those groundless prejudices. I shall only mention one of them, namely, That we swear to falsehoods in the bond and engagement to duty; and the falsehoods condescended upon are just two; it seems they know no more. The first of these two is, That it is a falsehood to say, that Mr Simson maintained his errors at the bar of the assembly in the year 1717. And the proof given for its being a falsehood is, that Mr Simson declared his adherence to our Confession of Faith, and disowned the errors opposite thereto. But it must be known, that Mr Simson never confessed, or took with one error vented by him: that he defended all his errors before the assembly, and had many advocates in the committees to assist him, at which some of us were eye and ear-witnesses; and, when matters came to a pinch with him, that some were threatening him with censure, then he declared his adherence to the Confession of Faith, and his disowning the errors opposite thereto; which was nothing but a plot of his own, and of his adherents, to save him from censure, and to screen his and their own pernicious principles. And his declaring his adherence to the Confession of Faith, was in itself nothing to the purpose, but a mere blind, to deceive men that wanted thought; for all along he owned his adherence to the Confession of Faith, and explained the Confession of Faith in a sense consistent with his own errors: so, since he acknowledged no error he had fallen into inconsistent with the Confession of Faith, his explaining the Confession in an agreeableness to his own errors, was the

strongest way to maintain them, and to give error the victory over truth. Wherefore those that would make objections at this day, to disturb people, and put them from their duty, would need to be better acquainted with the facts they make objections about, and understand the true state of matters some better, as to the truths of God, and the wounds they have received, before they adventure so boldly to mislead others. Such another instance they had before the last assembly this same very year, when a Socinian came before them; and because he pretended to adhere to the Confession of Faith, he came off in triumph. So much for the first falsehood.—The other falsehood is, that it is asserted, in the confession of sins prefixed to the bond, that the kind reception Mr Whitefield got from many, both of the ministers and people of this church, or any entertainment his doctrine got, was a denial of any particular form of church-government to be of divine institution. But if this be considered a little, it will come out to be no falsehood, but a certain truth, that these ministers and people, who entertained, heard, and encouraged Mr Whitefield, after he had declared against Presbyterial church-government, and pretended it is a matter of no moment, whether the government be prelatical, or presbyterial, or congregational, providing men hold by the essentials of religion, as they call it. I say, it must be a certain truth, that those who encouraged Mr Whitefield, after he had declared against the divine right of Presbyterial church-government, did practically deny that Presbyterial government is of divine institution; for they must, in the nature of the thing, either be reputed, in their principle, to have given up with Presbyterial government's being of divine institution, or to have

taken it upon themselves, poor sinful mortals, to make free with God's institutions, and to have boldly adventured to assist a strolling priest of the church of England, to pull down what Christ has built by his own authority in his eternal word. Let them chuse which of the two they will. It will stand to be a truth, as long as Christ has a church upon earth, that the supporters and encouragers of that instrument of Satan in the land, have, by their practice, been employing themselves in burying a testimony for Christ's headship and royalties, and for the order and government of his house, directly contrary to the word of God, their own ordination-vows, and our Covenants National and Solemn League, which are bonds they are under, which will not untie for them, by all human power and authority whatsoever; so that they had need to take heed what guilt they have involved themselves in, and how to have their condition remedied; which I heartily wish for; and give themselves less trouble in drawing out unjust charges and indictments against others. So that, for all that has been said, yea, or can be said, the evils contained in the confession of sins remain to be truths. Alas! true with a witness: the truth and evidence of which, if repentance prevent not, will meet the consciences of the men of these lands at the tribunal of God.

3. This doctrine serves for reproof to those, who, though they have put hand to this work, yet have not done it in a dependence on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his strength alone. It is possible there may be some of this stamp among us; and therefore there is a call directed to us, to look and consider how we have performed this solemn duty of swearing to the Lord of hosts. You see it is a duty

pointed out in a promise, as in the text: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts." They shall swear to the Lord of hosts; which is as much as if he had said, I will be at the work to assist in it, and to carry it on to my praise and your comfort. How justly then are they to be reprov'd; who have not taken him along with them, by faith in his promise, in every part of this solemn and weighty work? But again,

4. THIS doctrine serves also to reprove those who have gone about this solemn work, and have not been single in their ends; who have had any end whatsoever besides the glory of God, which ought to be chiefly in our eye in all our approaches to him; and more especially in such a very solemn approach, as that of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts.

5. THIS doctrine reaches a reproof to those who may be desponding, and are cast down as to the performance of their vows, thinking, perhaps, that they will never perform those solemn ties and engagements to the Lord. Why, this is a duty he has called to; yea, not only so, but it is a duty he has engaged to assist his people in, in his covenant of promise, both as to the making and paying of vows; as you may see evident from the text, and the 21st verse of the chapter. And do you think that he is going to leave you to yourselves in paying your vows, now when you have been led out in his strength, and in obedience to his command, to make them? No, no, he will be with you; for he hath said, "They shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Therefore let our confidence and trust be in him, who is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea. We may trust him with all the work; for, because of our great

unbelief, he sets down both day and date to his promise: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of hosts; yea, they shall vow a vow to the Lord, and perform it." Again,

6. THIS doctrine reproves those who have gone about this solemn duty, and are yet in a natural state. We know not but such may be among us; and therefore this calls you all to try your state, how matters are with you after this solemnity. You see the connection is plain, in the verse where our text lies: "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts." The language of Canaan is a language that cannot be spoken by those who are Egyptians, who are in a natural state; and if any have been professing to speak this part of the language of Canaan, namely, swearing to the Lord of hosts, and are yet in a natural state, they are surely, by this text and doctrine, very reprovably. But then, again,

7. THIS doctrine reproves those who have come rashly forward, and have not, as the Lord gave capacity and opportunity, pondered the matter seriously and deliberately, as in his sight. It is a very solemn work, and ought deliberately to be pondered: but this is not to exclude the weak from joining in this work; but it is a duty that calls for due deliberation from all.

In the *last* place, upon this use, this doctrine reaches a reproof to those who are putting this covenant of duty in the room of the covenant of grace, and who perhaps are thinking themselves farther advanced than others, because they have been joining in this solemn work. Alas! that is sad, if you are

putting your covenant of duty in the room of God's covenant of grace: if thou art not enabled to come beyond all thy duties, to put all thy work in his hand, lipning for nothing on the account of thy performances, but leaning on him alone, and that covenant that stands fast with God's chosen: if this is not the case with thee, it is very sad. If the Lord Jesus, in his person and righteousness, is not the alone ground of thy hope, thy hope is vain.

WE proceed now, by the Lord's assistance, to conclude this subject, by speaking a word to some different sorts of persons. And,

1. A word to you, who have been admitted to join in this solemn work of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts. 2. A word to you, that have not yet been clear as to your duty in this matter, and are taking it to consideration. 3. A word to you, who have been at a communion-table. 4. A word to you, who, by your ignorance, have been debarred from joining in this solemn work of swearing to the Lord of hosts, and also from the Lord's table.

1. A word to you, who have been admitted to join in this solemn work of vowing and swearing to the Lord of hosts; and we would say to you, my friends,

(1.) "THIS day you have avouched the Lord to be your God:" You have made a solemn profession: You have said, with Jacob at Bethel, "The Lord shall be my God;" and this soul, this heart of mine, shall be "the temple of the living God." See then that you live within sight of Christ: be concerned to maintain this relation you have come under to him: "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord." Live by faith on him as your God.

(2.) WE say to you, as you have avouched the Lord to be your God; so the Lord himself "hath avouched you to be his peculiar people." As to you who have been minding to go singly about this work; no thanks to you, it came from him; and the praise must go all back to him. "He hath avouched you this day to be his peculiar people." Live on him, then, as his people devoted to him; live on his word of grace and promise; live on the grace that is in the hand of the new-covenant Head; look like his peculiar people, whom he has chosen and avouched as such, and who are devoted to him as such.

3. WE would say to you, you are by profession now a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. You are a people that dwell alone, 1. In point of profession; 2. In point of privilege. "Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord? "There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help. The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath thee are his everlasting arms. Thou art warranted to improve, and just by faith to call in all his perfections, as thy shadow to cover thee, and thy shield to defend thee, in whatever circumstances you are or may be in. You are also a people that dwell alone in point of duty; and you are to be a people holy to the Lord. You are to walk circumspectly, "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." You are to walk before him in the light of the living; and in his strength you are to make "your light so to shine before men, as that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." But,

(4.) WE would say to you, You are now to gird

your armour, and arise, and go up and possess the land; look like pilgrims and strangers on this earth; keep up a warfare with all his enemies; let your life, your walk, and your talk, and all your conversation, be like those that have been with Jesus.

(5.) WE would say to you, Walk up and down in his name: "Every one will walk in the name of their God: and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God" for ever and ever.

Lastly, WE would say to you, Remember, in the strength of his grace, to pay your vows to the Lord your God: "Vow and pay to the Lord your God: Let all that be round about him, bring presents to him that ought to be feared." But,

2. WE would speak a word to you, that have not yet been clear as to your duty in this matter, and are taking it to consideration. We would say to you,

(1.) BE humbled before the Lord, that you have been left to be in a hesitation, and to be mistaken in a duty that is so plain and clear in itself. Surely there is a cause for this; and therefore be humbled for it, that you have not been careful enough in considering this matter: be humbled, that you have been too careless in putting in thy small mite, for lifting up the burden of his praise, in a day when the generation are so openly denying him.

(2.) Do not think that you are less bound, because you have not come under these bonds and engagements, than others who have come under the same; for you are bound by your baptismal vows, and by our Covenants National and Solemn League, though at this time you have not gone the length of renewing the same.

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(3.) Do not think you may be more careless than those who have vowed to the Lord ; and do not think you are in less hazard than those who have been professing more : “ He that trusteth to his own understanding is a fool.” These are bonds of God’s own framing ; and he will observe those that are slack in entering into the same ; and help those who are single in the matter, to pay their vows to the Lord.

(4.) HUMBLE yourself before the Lord for your neglect of this opportunity : take with it on your knees before the Lord ; for we can declare you have reason to be humbled for it, it being the neglect of a present and seasonable duty ; and look to him, that he may prepare you for this work, when he, in providence, may give you another opportunity ; and, in the mean time, give heart and hand to him in secret. Commit your souls to his keeping, as to a faithful Creator. We come,

3. To speak a word to you who have been at a communion-table, on the mount of the God of Jacob. And,

(1.) WE shall speak a word to you who art the presumptuous communicant, who had not the Lord’s call to go to his table ; and that such are among you, we have reason to suspect. For,

[1.] ARE there not some who have come to the Lord’s table, whose religion is all outward ? It is not in the heart. Perhaps you perform some duties, but you neglect others more needful. Is there not a great neglect of keeping the heart, a great neglect of feeding upon the word of God ? But then,

[2.] ARE there not some, whose ends were not

right in approaching the Lord's table, such as had only this for their end, to obtain a name among others, but had no concern to meet with him in his ordinances? We tell you your ends were not right. Such as have no concern to meet with him in secret duties; such as never did meet with him, and yet are not troubled about it, and have, notwithstanding, come to the Lord's table; your ends could not be right, you are the presumptuous communicant. And we would say to you,

1.] YOUR sin is great; you have crucified the Lord of glory afresh, and put him to open shame, by your approach to his table. You are guilty of the blood of the Son of God: you are guilty of the sin of Judas, who betrayed him; and of the sin of the Jews, that crucified him,

2.] WE would say to you, O repent of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your hearts may be forgiven thee. We call you to repent, and believe the gospel: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Therefore believe in the Lord Jesus, and repent of this, and all your transgressions; and you shall receive the remission of sins.

(2.) IN speaking to you that have been at the Lord's table, we would also speak a word to the doubting disconsolate communicant.

[1.] PERHAPS you are filled with doubts and fears. You are doubting, because you did not meet with him at this gospel-feast. But tell me, Did you meet with him at any former occasion? What past at the meet-

ing? Did you say, with Jacob at Bethel, "The Lord shall be my God?" Was there a song at the meeting? Was you made to sing with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Was there a putting all in his hand at the meeting? "I know in whom I have believed; and that he is able to keep that good thing which I have committed unto him, against that day." Well, if that is the case, be encouraged: "Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning." "I will see you again," saith the Lord to the disciples; "and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." Again,

[2.] PERHAPS some are filled with doubts and fears; and the occasion of this is, You thought you had some blink of his countenance at the solemn occasion, but it was immediately gone. We tell you, Manifestations of his glory are but very short here-away: wait on him; by this he teaches you the waiting-exercise. He hath said, "The isles shall wait for his law; and on his arm shall they trust."

[3.] PERHAPS some may be saying, We did endeavour to mint at duty, though in much weakness; and we minted at joining in both the duty of swearing to the Lord of hosts, and the duty of shewing forth his death till he come; but, alas! "Though the summer be past, and the harvest be ended, yet we are not saved;" we are in doubts and perplexities still. We think, if we were brought the length of waiting upon him, and trusting in him, we would be as those that walk at liberty; but O! we are in doubts still, if ever we met with him. We would say to you,

1.] THE Lord will have us learn to glorify him, by a life of faith upon him, even when he denies sensible comforts and enlargements. Thank and bless him, that he keeps you about his hand in the mean time, and wait upon him still.

2.] We would have you to know, that although you have, at this time, been explicitly owning his cause; yet all of us have a deep hand in the defections and backslidings of the day wherein we live: and the Lord will have us brought to a sense of our sins, and he will have self down in us; and that he may humble us, he hides his face from us.

3.] You may consider this as one reason why there is not so much sensible comfort in going about this solemn work, as has been felt and experienced in former times, when this work was adopted by the whole land. Why! this is one reason, we think, because it is only a duty gone about in corners as yet, and he is not going to keep house with these few, and leave the rest; and therefore there must be a waiting on him, to bring the land universally to go about this work; and then he shall make every man sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree.

4.] CONSIDER that this duty is but a dawning, as it were, as yet, and we may have many difficulties to go through in carrying on this work; and he will reserve more of the comfortable outlettings of his special presence, till we be more deeply involved in difficulties, and then it shall be given in that hour. Wait on him then: "He is a God of judgment;" "and blessed are all they that wait for him." We shall,

(3.) SPEAK a word to the enlarged and comforted communicant. And, [1.] We would say to you, Try your manifestations, if they be of the right kind and nature. Which, if they are, then, 1.] You will lothe yourself, in your own sight, for all your iniquities and abominations. 2.] If they be of the right kind, Christ is getting more room with you than ever he got before: 3.] You will be made to maintain the warfare with indwelling sin, and to keep yourselves from your own iniquity. But, [2.] We would say to you, Look out for some trial approaching to you; take him along through the wilderness with you in every step. [3.] Be thankful to him, that he gave a blink to you in this dark and hiding day, when so many are complaining. [4.] We would say to you, Hold the Beloved, and do not let him go, till you bring him to your mother's house, and to the chambers of her that conceived you. Be concerned for Zion, that no man careth for; give him no rest, till he make her a praise in the whole earth. Lastly, we would say to you, "Walk worthy of him unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work: walk up and down in his name, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only; and let the heart of every one rejoice that seeks the Lord." We come,

4. To conclude with a word to you, who, by your ignorance, have been debarred from joining in this solemn work of swearing to the Lord of hosts; and also from the Lord's table. And we would say to you, (1.) O do not think that you may go away from this place with a light heart, because you have not sworn to the Lord, nor been at the table of the Lord! I must tell you, your sin is great; it is great, if you come to this table, and eat and drink unwor-

thily. And it is also great if you stay away: for you are then living in the neglect of a plain commanded duty: your iniquity is bound up, to be brought out against you, at the day of your death, and at the time of your appearance before the tribunal of God.

(2.) We come to you with a call from the Master of the feast. His call to you is, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." "Gather the people together, and I will give them water: I will give them the sure mercies of David." Our God is a giving God in Christ. He giveth some things to you in the close of this work. He giveth his Son to you. "To us a child is born, to us a Son is given; whose name is, The everlasting Father, The mighty God, and, The Prince of peace." You have not a heart to receive a given Christ: but thus saith the Lord, "A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will cause you to walk in my ways, and to keep my judgments, and do them." This is God's record, "That he hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son;" and he giveth eternal life to you in his Son: "He that hath the Son hath life." And we are warranted to make an offer of Christ to you, and to every one of you. To you men, women, God having raised up his Son Jesus from the dead, hath sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities: "Lift up your heads, then, O ye gates! Be ye lifted up, that the King of glory may enter in! Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory. Selah." O then open to him! "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man will open unto me, I will come in, and sup with

"him, and he with me." If any man in this company, young or old, rich or poor, will open unto me, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." Put the heart in his hand this night, and be employed in Jacob's exercise: "He wept, and made supplication: he met with him in Bethel, and there he spake with us." Thus saith JEHOVAH, "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in loving-kindness; and thou shalt know the Lord: thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot: thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee," Hos. ii. 19. 20. and iii. 3. If you are for a law-righteousness, you are for another man: if you are for a fill of this world, you are for another man. But O! he offers himself to you, saying, "Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee." "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool."

The End of VOLUME FIRST.



